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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2005–06

COMPRISING PERIOD
20 March—30 March 2006

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20 March 2006

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 20 March 2006

TREASURY

Economic and Financial Affairs Council

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): At its meeting of 14 March 2006 the Economic and Financial Affairs Council adopted a key issues paper on economic reform to contribute to the European Council on 23–24 March.

The Council adopted a report to contribute to the Spring European Council on proposals by the European Investment Bank for promoting growth and employment in the EU.

The Council held an exchange of views on progress under the EU's better regulation initiative. It took note of progress made by the Commission and of a note from the presidency on reducing the administrative costs of Community programmes and measures and on experiences at national level.

ECOFIN noted a joint report on social protection and social inclusion, which had been previously adopted by the Employment Council.

The Council adopted opinions on the stability programmes of Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal and on the convergence programmes of Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and the United Kingdom.

The Council adopted a decision, under article 104(9) of the treaty, concerning the German excessive deficit. ECOFIN also agreed Conclusions endorsing progress made by Italy in correcting its excessive deficit.

ECOFIN approved a recommendation, to be forwarded to the European Parliament, on the discharge to be given to the Commission for implementation of the EU's general budget for 2004.

The Council adopted Conclusions regarding the preparation of the EU's General Budget for 2007.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Lewis), represented the UK.

DEFENCE

Project Allenby/Connaught

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): I would like to inform the House about progress with Project Allenby/Connaught. This private finance initiative (PFI) project will allow for the redevelopment of large areas of the estate in Aldershot garrison and garrisons in the Salisbury plain area, and for the provision of a wide range of support services. It is key to the delivery of strategic defence review barrack plot and is the largest estates based PFI project the Ministry of Defence has ever undertaken.

Funding of the project will be through the marketing of two series of bonds on the financial markets, and I am pleased to report that this phase has now started with the issuance of a preliminary prospectus. This process is expected to take two to three weeks and I will make a further statement to the House once financial close, the point at which funding for the project has been secured, and the contract with our preferred bidder, Aspire Defence Ltd. takes effect.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Beacon Scheme

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): We are announcing today the names of those authorities who have been awarded beacon status in round seven of the scheme. Sixty one applications from 85 authorities have been successful across 10 different themes. Ministers made their decisions following recommendations from the independent Advisory Panel on Beacons. Full details of round seven beacons and information on their excellence can be found in the publication "New Light", copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of the House. Beacon status is awarded for excellence and innovation in service delivery in specific themes and successful authorities receive a share of £3 million to help them work with other authorities to transfer their best practice.

We are also launching round eight of the scheme which invites authorities to apply for beacon status in 10 new themes that reflect the priorities of local and central government and communities across the country.

The application brochure, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of the House, sets out these themes and instructions on how to apply, including the detailed criteria that will be used to assess applications, and what being a beacon will mean. Following a rigorous assessment process including visits to shortlisted authorities, the Advisory Panel on Beacons will make recommendations to Ministers early next year and beacons will be announced in March 2007.

The beacon scheme provides a remarkably popular and successful way of both celebrating and promoting best practice in local government. It is an important element of the local government modernisation agenda—helping to deliver high quality public services. Beacons work with the Improvement and Development Agency to ensure other authorities across the country can learn from their excellence.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Early Reading (Teaching Methods)

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): Jim Rose has today published the final report of his review into the teaching of early reading, which I invited him to undertake in June 2005. It builds on the interim report published on 1 December 2005.

I am very grateful to Mr. Rose and his team for providing such an authoritative analysis of these complex issues, and for distilling them into a set of recommendations that enable us to help schools and settings move forward with confidence and clarity. The report sets out clearly the importance of high-quality and enjoyable systematic phonics instruction, on which the great majority of children can make a good start by the age of five. It emphasises the need for a carefully managed programme of training to ensure that we have a school and early years work force that is fully equipped to deliver phonics instruction of the high quality our children deserve. The report states that the most important way to raise standards is through "quality first" teaching, but that schools need to back this up with a systematic approach to interventions to make sure that they can intervene early to prevent children from falling behind.

I am pleased to accept all of the recommendations in the report, and I will ensure that they are implemented through a programme of training for teachers over the next two years, revising the framework for teaching literacy, and the professional standards for teachers and the wider workforce. I also want to ensure that both the foundation stage and key stage 1 curricula make clear that synthetic phonics should be the prime approach used in teaching all children to read, as Mr. Rose has recommended, and I will consult on how to remove any ambiguity in them. I am very pleased that Mr. Rose has agreed to help me assess how well the recommendations he has made are being implemented, by offering his advice on progress from time to time.

Implementing the report's recommendations will form part of the Government's drive to raise standards in literacy yet higher through effective personalised learning for all children. Personalised learning is at the heart of our effort to raise standards in both primary and secondary education, and will be the focus of the "Teaching and Learning 2020" review, led by Christine Gilbert, that was launched last week.

Mr. Rose's report is a timely reminder of how important learning to read is for children's educational, social and emotional development. Great improvements have been made in the teaching of reading since the introduction of the Government's national literacy strategy, and more children than ever before are reaching the expected standard at the end of primary school: 84 per cent. last summer compared to 67 per cent. in 1997. The report says that this happened because the national literacy strategy,

> "engaged schools in developing a structured teaching programme of literacy that included not only what phonic content should be taught but also how to teach it".

I am proud of what has been achieved, but we must not stop raising standards. The report provides compelling support for the argument that raising standards and helping more children to read should be the first priority of every primary school, which requires strong leadership from the governors, head teachers and senior managers.

The report shows clearly that learning to read can and should be fun, through a programme of high quality phonics teaching. It points to much evidence of good practice in schools and early years settings, including in the early reading development pilots that I announced alongside Jim Rose's review. It is clear that good teaching means fidelity to a systematic programme of phonics teaching, using multi-sensory approaches to learning and placing this within a rich language curriculum. I am grateful to Mr. Rose for the proposals for a new "simple model of reading" to put these ideas into effect and will ask the primary national strategy to implement this through the forthcoming revised framework for teaching literacy.

Mr. Rose's analysis makes it clear that children should start phonics by the age of five, and that those who are ready to start earlier should do so. He states that the introduction of phonic work is a matter for professional judgment based on structured observations and assessments of children's capabilities. The early reading development pilots are already showing that systematic phonic instruction by the age of five can be done successfully in schools and early years settings exploiting the power of play, story, songs, rhymes and drama. I will ensure that the conclusions of the review are reflected in the new early years foundation stage.

I agree with the report's conclusion that these changes will require a carefully managed programme of training for teachers and the wider school and early years workforce. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) is already revising the professional standards for teachers, and developing standards for the wider workforce, with supporting guidance and requirements. These will reflect the review's recommendations and set the requirements which training must meet. Mr. Rose has acknowledged the excellent contribution that the primary national strategy has made to improving the teaching of reading and the use of systematic phonics. I will ensure, through the strategy, that teachers' training is enhanced in accordance with the report's recommendations and the new framework for teaching literacy over the next academic year. The quality of initial teacher training (ITT) has also improved significantly, with 80 per cent. of trainees showing good or very good subject knowledge in English. But I, and the TDA, share Mr. Rose's view that ITT providers need to look again at how to equip newly qualified teachers with the skills to teach phonics. The TDA and the primary national strategy will ensure that support is available for ITT providers to help them implement the new standards over the next two years, and I will ask Ofsted to review the quality of training in the teaching of reading that ITT providers offer at the end of that period.

Although by far the majority of children reach the expected standard in reading at the end of primary school, there remains a significant group who do not, and who need extra help to achieve the expected standard. I agree with the report's conclusion that for most children, the most important thing their school can provide them with is "quality first" whole class teaching. Alongside this the report also endorses the primary national strategy's approach to the deployment of a range of "wave 2" and "wave 3" interventions to support those children who find it more difficult to learn to read, or who have more serious learning disabilities. I am pleased that Mr. Rose found that some of the leading edge interventions and associated training currently offered to schools are of a very high quality. In particular he praised the training for teachers offered by programmes such as reading recovery and those provided by the Dyslexia Institute. We will continue to support schools with guidance on how best provision and practice are matched to different types of SEN. As they implement the new teaching frameworks, every school will need to think through their approach to interventions, ensuring that it is founded on quality first teaching, that interventions are carefully managed as part of the wider curriculum, and that the school takes a systematic approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children who are at risk of falling behind before this happens.

The report makes clear that schools and teachers have the capacity to implement its recommendations, and that many are already doing so, supported by materials from the primary national strategy and others. I am confident that with appropriate training and support from the strategy, all schools will be able to teach reading to the standards of the best observed in the course of this review.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

FCO Services

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I am delighted to announce that, on 1 April 2006, FCO Services will become an Executive Agency of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Mr Christopher Moxey, formerly Director of Global Implementation Projects for Financial Network Services, has been appointed as its Chief Executive.

FCO Services will continue to supply the FCO with a broad range of products and services covering IT, communications, technical and protective security, estate and project management, logistics and purchasing, language translation, interpreting and training, VIP visits and organisation of major conferences both in the UK and overseas. FCO Services will employ approximately 1,200 permanent staff, many of whom are specialists, including about 100 staff serving at FCO Missions overseas.

FCO Services' long-term aim is to continue to improve the services it offers and the value for money provided to its principal customer, the FCO, while also broadening its customer base within government and the private sector. FCO Services will continue to improve productivity by streamlining work processes, standardising operating procedures, and improving staff utilisation rates.

FCO Services' key performance targets from its launch will be:

Financial

FCO Services will aim to recover the full cost of its operations including an appropriate allowance for the cost of capital.

Efficiency

FCO Services will continue to improve productivity by streamlining work processes, standardising operating procedures, and improving staff utilisation rates. As a result, the average utilisation rate target will improve by 10 per cent. during 2006–07.

Growth in income from wider markets

A major element of FCO Services' strategy is to increase wider market sales in order to reduce costs to and improve service delivery to government. Its target is to achieve 5 per cent., 5 per cent. and 10 per cent. cumulative growth in its wider market business over the next three years.

Overall quality measure identified from independent customer survey results.

FCO Services aims to monitor improvements in service delivery through feedback from customer surveys. It aims to achieve a customer satisfaction rating of either good or excellent for over 70 per cent. of its work.

FCO Services will report to Parliament on its success against these targets through its Annual Report.

Copies of the Framework Document will be placed in the Library of the House. A copy will also be available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Force Restructuring

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Further to my written statements on 6 February and 3 March, I should like to make a statement to report progress on the review of police force structures.

The review was announced in September 2005 and followed the publication of HMIC's report, *Closing the Gap*, which revealed stark shortcomings in the current arrangements' ability to meet the policing needs of the early 21st century.

My statements of 6 February and 3 March set out the way forward for Wales and three English regions, the north-east, the north-west and the west midlands. I now have the professional policing and financial assessments to enable me to identify which options will be of the greatest benefit to three more regions, namely the east midlands, south-east and eastern. I am therefore today meeting representatives from the police forces and authorities in these areas. I will be inviting them to engage closely with me to consider taking forward the option for policing that I believe will be of greatest benefit to their communities. I will be inviting the police authorities concerned to respond by 7 April. I shall then make a final decision on how to proceed in these areas.

My vision for the police service in the 21st century is that it should be close, responsive and accountable to the communities it serves, supported by larger forces with the capacity and specialist expertise to protect the public from wider threats such as serious and organised crime. The roll out of neighbourhood policing across the country by April 2008 is, with the creation of strategic forces, the key to achieving that vision.

I shall make a further report to the House about the way forward for forces in the Yorkshire and the Humber and the south-west shortly.

Options proposed at this stage as suitable for progression:

East Midlands

Merger of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.

South-east

Merger of Surrey and Sussex;

Hampshire, Kent and Thames Valley reconfigured as strategic forces.

East

Merger of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk; Merger of Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Child Protection (Northern Ireland)

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): The protection of children is a matter that I and other Ministers in Northern Ireland take extremely seriously and an area in which we have prioritised action. There have been a number of high profile child protection cases and inquiries in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, all of which have demonstrated the need for system improvement. Ministers are committed to ensuring the highest levels of protection are afforded to children in Northern Ireland. The purpose of this statement is to set out a package of child protection measures and initiatives that we intend to bring forward.

It is not possible to separate protection of children from prevention and support for parents, safe systems, funding and a range of inter-related Government policies. On children's issues this administration has taken a number of bold steps to build on the work of previous Ministers and the Northern Ireland Executive. Recently I appointed Jeff Rooker as the Minister for children and young people to bring greater co-ordination to children's policy and legislation across Government. This builds on the work of previous Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive which established the Commissioner for Children and Young People to safeguard the rights and best interests of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

We will shortly publish a 10-year strategy for children and young people. This strategy will set out what will be done across Government to improve the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland. It will contain high level outcomes and indicators against which we will measure progress.

Allied to this are the new funding arrangements we have put in place for improved children's services. The children and young people's funding package will make £61 million of additional funding available over the next two years and is aimed at removing barriers to learning, reducing underachievement and improving the life chances of disadvantaged and marginalised children and young people. The range of measures it includes will help schools in these areas extend the traditional school day and offer a range of activities and services to children and their families before, during and after school hours, wherever possible on the school site.

In addition to all of this we are today announcing a range of measures to strengthen the child protection system.

I would like to emphasise that the protection and safeguarding of children is everyone's business: Ministers, Government Departments, local government, and the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. The public also clearly has an important role to play. There is a need to ensure that collective responsibilities are reflected in our systems and structures and that the protection and safeguarding of children is on everyone's agenda. Therefore we intend to take the following action.

We will strengthen inter-agency co-operation on child protection through the establishment of a new Northern Ireland safeguarding board. This will ensure co-operation on child protection and safeguarding arrangements at the highest level within Government Departments, local government and in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. It will have an independent chair and clear accountability lines to Ministers. The board will be established in shadow form by the end of this year. We will publish a consultation paper on arrangements and structures underpinning the safeguarding board which will be given statutory basis.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety will shortly begin piloting a multi-agency, multi-disciplininary assessment framework aimed at ensuring that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are assessed on a consistent basis across Northern Ireland. Allied to this, front line child protection services will be enhanced and reorganised over the next 12 months to ensure a more expert, more consistent and faster response when assessing children in need and responding to child protection concerns.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety will shortly issue a consultation document on a regional child death review protocol. This will implement one of the key recommendations arising from the Lewis Inquiry and the case management review into the death of David Briggs. These arrangements will apply to the unexpected deaths of all children under 18 years of age and will ensure that all relevant information about a child's death is brought together at an early stage. The protocol will acknowledge that the vast majority of children who die tragically do so for natural or for reasons that can be explained. It will also help ensure that bereaved parents will receive a more co-ordinated response.

New structures are important. However, they also require a change of thinking, practice and culture. We will look at ways in which this can be facilitated. For example, we will consider a new statutory duty to co-operate to improve well being. This would take account of current structural arrangements and those proposed under the reform of public administration. We will also consider how this might be complemented by a statutory duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, a duty which school boards of governors now have, but which would be placed on a wide range of agencies and organisations. It is our intention to consult on these new statutory duties in the near future.

I am keen to ensure that safeguarding the welfare of children remains a high priority for all, particularly at a time of considerable administrative reform, and that the risk of children falling between stools is minimised. I intend to commission all Departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies to conduct an audit of existing child protection arrangements to determine how these might be strengthened. I also intend to ask those inspectorates and regulatory bodies with responsibility for children to assist with audit exercises, by offering professional input. As recommended by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, I will ask all Departments and relevant executive agencies and non-Departmental public bodies to appoint a senior official with responsibility for child protection. Nominated officials will receive the necessary training, will be the custodians of child protection policy and will ensure that systems are in place, which provide assurances that policy is being appropriately applied.

Local government clearly plays an important role in the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland. It is absolutely essential that local government has robust protective arrangements in place. Lord Rooker, in his dual role as Minister for Children and Young People and Minister of the Environment, has undertaken to engage with district councils to promote an acceptable standard of child protection practice.

It is essential, when there are child protection concerns, that there is certainty and confidence about how those concerns are reported. To help create greater certainty, I have asked the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to prepare short guidance on child protection, which will set out what steps need to be taken when there are concerns about the safety of a child. This guidance will be widely distributed through Government and, with the assistance of the four area child protection committees, local government, the statutory, community and voluntary sectors.

I would like to turn to the matter of vetting arrangements for those who work with children. This is a matter which is of great concern to parents and the public. We must ensure our systems are safe, robust and reliable and, most importantly, that they have the confidence of the public. The tragic events in Soham act as a constant reminder.

In Northern Ireland vetting arrangements have recently been strengthened by Government. My colleague, the Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith) announced a wide ranging review of vetting and recruitment for staff in the education sector on 18 January. New measures have now been introduced which will strengthen the pre-employment checking for all new recruits to work in schools or in support of schools and will provide clear guidance to employers and schools. A programme to promote full vetting coverage of all staff already working in or in support of grant aided schools and the vetting of governors will provide reassurance to the public, and parents in particular, about the safety of the environment in which children are educated. Procedures for the engagement of substitute teachers and other temporary staff have been tightened, as have the arrangements for training members of selection panels. We are implementing Part 5 of the Police Act 1997 to ensure the Police Service of Northern Ireland has a statutory basis to disclose relevant non-conviction data on posts that involve work with children. We continue to work with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, who recently conducted a review of vetting arrangements in Northern Ireland. The review endorsed the Government's work in this area. Recommendations arising from the review are currently being implemented and we have provided the Commissioner with an update on progress. We will also provide the Commissioner with a timetable for the completion of outstanding actions and will cooperate fully with his planned follow-up review later this year.

Sir Michael Bichard's Inquiry and subsequent report, following the Soham tragedy, provides a route map for system improvements that have United Kingdom-wide applicability, particularly his recommendation, which will be lead to the creation of a new vetting and barring scheme. New legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, will shortly be introduced in Parliament.

I am confirming today that the new vetting and barring scheme will apply in Northern Ireland and Departments will be working in close collaboration to take forward the implementation of the new legislation. Our aim is to ensure that Northern Ireland keeps pace with developments both in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Parliament enacted the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (POCVA) Order in 2003. This legislation brought Northern Ireland into line with developments in England and Wales with the creation of a new statutory list of those banned from working with children and a new offence of applying to work in certain post whilst disqualified. There is a unique provision in POCVA relating to "accreditation arrangements". The Order allows non-child care organisations such as churches, uniformed and sporting bodies in Northern Ireland to become accredited by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Once accredited, those organisations will acquire a statutory duty to carry out vetting and to report staff moved or dismissed for harming children. To become accredited, organisations will have to demonstrate that they meet specific child protection standards, including the need to have in place a child protection policy and a code of conduct for staff.

Accreditation will, in effect, "kite mark" organisations and will assist in improving child protection arrangements in voluntary and community organisations. We will shortly be publishing a consultation paper on the future shape of accreditation arrangements and are aiming to see the situation where all organisations, which work with children, do so within a framework that ensures the highest standards for children.

When the Sexual Offences Act was made by Parliament in 2003 a number of new child sex offences were not extended to Northern Ireland. We intend to ensure that children in this jurisdiction will receive the same protections as those in England and Wales. My colleague, the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, the hon. Member for Delyn (Mr. David Hanson) will shortly be announcing more detailed proposals on a review of sexual offences law in Northern Ireland. This will see the creation of new offences and increased tariffs for those who harm children.

The Government will also seek to bring forward legislation to strengthen the interagency arrangements that exist, currently on a procedural basis, for the assessment and risk management of sex offenders. These arrangements, known as MASRAM (multi agency sex offender risk assessment and management), were launched in 2002. While they have worked well, it is our intention to give MASRAM arrangements statutory force and to ensure that risk assessment and management arrangements are extended to violent offenders. As with new child protection arrangements we will seek to underpin the operation of assessment and risk management of sexual and violent offenders with a duty on agencies to co-operate with the police, prison and probation services.

I conclude by saying that the proposed measures I have announced today represent a firm foundation for the protection of children from those intent on causing them harm. I recognise that we can never be complacent and we will seek to continually build on and strengthen and improve arrangements to ensure that all of our children and young people are afforded a high standard of protection, comparable to that afforded to children and young people living in other parts of the United Kingdom.

PRIME MINISTER

Inteligence Services Commissioner

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce that I have approved the appointment of the right hon. Sir Peter Gibson as Intelligence Services Commissioner under the terms of section 59 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The appointment will commence on 1 April 2006 and will run for three years.

Interception of Communications Commissioner

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce that I have approved the appointment of the right hon. Sir Paul Kennedy as Interception of Communications Commissioner under the terms of section 57 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The appointment will commence on 11 April 2006 and will run for three years.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Low Pay Commission Report (Government Response)

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): The Government asked the Low Pay Commission last summer to produce their next report on the national minimum wage by the end of February 2006. The Government are today publishing the Commission's 2006 report and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the nine Commissioners for their work on the report and in particular to thank the Chair, Lord Turner of Ecchinswell for his stewardship of the Commission over the last four years.

The main recommendations put forward by the Commission concern the rates of the minimum wage. The Commission have confirmed their earlier recommendations, made in their 2005 report, that the adult rate of the minimum wage should be increased from £5.05 to £5.35 in October 2006, and that the development rate, which covers workers aged 18 to 21, should be increased on the same date from £4.25 to £4.45. The Commission have also recommended that the Government should increase the 16–17 year old rate from £3 to £3.30, again from October 2006.

The Government have accepted these recommendations. The Commission has also made a number of other recommendations. The Government:

> accepts the recommendation that salary sacrifice schemes, including those for childcare vouchers, should not count towards the minimum wage;
>
> accepts the recommendation that the Government should update guidance on the accommodation offset. However we will need to consider carefully their recommendation on the need for possible tightening of the legislation;
>
> will consider the recommendation that the Commission be invited to review the apprenticeship exemptions in 2008 when preparing their 2007 remit;
>
> will take into account their recommendation that enforcement should be stepped-up in sectors that employ migrant workers when considering sectors for targeted enforcement action in the future.

Copies of this statement, the report from the Low Pay Commission, the Government's individual response to the Commission's recommendations and our draft regulatory impact assessment have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Incapacity Benefits (Permitted Work Rules)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mrs. Anne McGuire): I am pleased to announce these changes to the permitted work rules. Research has shown that almost a quarter of people trying permitted work have found jobs. We aim to make improvements to the current arrangements to enhance the attractiveness of this provision, with a better structure of information, support and guidance to assist more people on incapacity benefits to progress to full time work. The accompanying changes to the rules will allow all participants an initial 52 week period of permitted work earning up to £81 a week. In addition people with advanced, progressive conditions which severely limit their capacity for work will be able to earn up to £81 beyond the 52 week limit.

The notice requirements for permitted work are removed by these changes to provide a simplification of the rules and people preparing for self-employment through the test trading scheme will no longer be subject to the permitted work earnings limits but will instead be treated as undertaking training.

In addition the Government are also making changes to improve the operation of the linking rules which protect the rate of benefit for people who return to incapacity benefits having become incapable of work after attempting work or training. These changes ensure that people who notify a return to work in advance or are entitled to the same protection as those who provide notification after the event and that people who receive statutory sick pay before incapacity benefit are eligible for protection after six months of incapacity in the same way as incapacity benefit recipients now.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 21 March 2006

DEFENCE

Ministry of Defence Estate Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): *The departmental Strategy for the Defence Estate 2006—In Trust and On Trust* will be published today. It builds on the robust foundations and achievements of *In Trust and On Trust: The Strategy for the Defence Estate* published in June 2000—the first comprehensive strategy for the management and use of the Ministry of Defence's estate—but it recognises new challenges and aspirations. The strategy will continue to deliver a more efficient and effective estate and ensure that the Ministry of Defence targets resources to the estate in the most effective way. Copies will be made available in the Library of the House; it will also be available via the MOD website at: www.mod.uk.

The strategy is aimed at all estate stakeholders, and the Ministry of Defence has consulted closely with external stakeholders who have an interest in the defence estate. The primary challenge is to produce an estate that enables the Armed Forces to counter new and existing threats, and respond effectively to the changing demands and requirements placed upon them. The ability to provide effective training, living and working facilities for our service personnel and those who support them is crucial to the successful outcome of Ministry of Defence business. Sustainable development will continue to be at the heart of all departmental estate planning and management processes. This is a far reaching document which will be of benefit to all those with an interest in the Ministry of Defence's estate.

Defence Estates Stewardship Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The Stewardship Report on the Defence Estate 2005 will be published today. The publication of the report implements the commitment in the Defence Estate Strategy "In Trust and On Trust" to report annually performance across a range of estate-related objectives, and to demonstrate that the Department is discharging its obligations properly and acting responsibly in meeting the needs of the Armed Forces. The report attempts to balance:

(a) describing the substantial investment made in the estate, the successes over the year, the other steps being taken to improve the effectiveness of management and the achievement of value for money, with

(b) the commitment to provide an account of our stewardship to external stakeholders.

The report is similar to previous ones in that it sets out the progress against the aims and objectives in the Defence Estate Strategy and demonstrates how the estate is changing as a result. Copies will be made available in the Library of the House; it will also be available via the MOD website at: www.mod.uk.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I will be representing the United Kingdom at this month's Agriculture and Fisheries Council.

The Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner will update the Council on developments with regard to the spread of the Avian Influenza H5N1 virus.

There will be a presentation by the Commission on measures to support the poultry sector, as a result of the economic impact on the poultry market due to the consumer reactions to avian influenza. Consumption of poultry in several member states has fallen, despite scientific advice that there is no food safety risk from properly cooked poultry meat.

The Council will then adopt proposals on changes to the rules for protected geographical indications and traditional specialties for agriculture products.

In the afternoon, there will be a policy debate on the review of the sustainable development strategy based on presidency questions. I will intervene to draw attention to the main areas where European agriculture and fisheries policy can contribute to sustainable development.

There will be discussion of a French memorandum calling for more simplification of the CAP and the introduction of new measures for the management of market risks and crises. I will stress the importance of avoiding new EU measures which contradict the market direction of recent reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development will update the Council on the WTO agricultural negotiations including the outcome of the G6 Trade Ministers meeting in London last weekend.

Italy will urge the Commission to resume the European Union's voluntary contribution to the International Olive Oil Council's promotional work.

Seafish Industry Authority

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): The Sea Fish Industry Authority (SFIA) was established in 1981 to serve the interests of the UK sea fish industry. It is regulated by the four fisheries administrations in the UK.

An independent review of the SFIA was conducted and the report was published in February. An initial Government response to the review, setting out proposals for the future of the SFIA, was also released for public consultation in February. Stakeholders are invited to engage in discussion with the SFIA during a 12 week consultation period and then provide comments regarding their views to the four fisheries administrations (DEFRA, SEERAD, WAG and DARDNI) by 5 May.

Stakeholder views will be taken into consideration by Ministers and recommendations will be discussed with the SFIA when issuing the final response later this summer.

Copies of the Report and the initial Government response have been published on the DEFRA and SEERAD websites and been placed in the Commons and the Public Library. In addition, a press release was published in *Fishing News*, *The Grocer* and other regional publications.

Details of the procedure for consultation can be found on the DEFRA and SEERAD websites.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Force Restructuring

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Further to my written statement of 20 March, I should like to make a statement to report progress on the review of police force structures in the Yorkshire and the Humber region.

My statement of 20 March set out the way forward for the east midlands, south- east and eastern regions. This followed similar statements on 6 February and 3 March which set out the way forward for Wales and three English regions, the north-east, the north-west and the west midlands. I now have the professional policing and financial assessments to enable me to identify which option will be of the greatest benefit to the Yorkshire and the Humber region. I am therefore today meeting the representatives from the police forces and authorities in this area and, as with the other force and authorities, I will be inviting them to engage closely with me to consider taking forward the option for policing which I believe will be of greatest benefit to their communities. I will be inviting the police authorities concerned to respond by 7 April and I shall then make a final decision on how to proceed in this area.

I shall make a further report to the House about the way forward for forces in the south-west in May.

Options proposed at this stage as suitable for progression

Yorkshire and the Humber

Merger of Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Police Pensions

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): With the introduction of a new tax regime for pensions from 6 April of this year, it will be necessary for pension schemes to be registered with HM Customs and Revenue before receiving tax privileges. As a result of the discrete way in which the current pension scheme for the Police Service of Northern Ireland was established the scheme will be registered separately from the scheme for officers serving in Home Forces in Great Britain. To coincide with the tax changes, three new police pension schemes are being introduced from April 2006. As a result, officers transferring between Northern Ireland and Great Britain on or after 6 April would not be able to remain in the current pension scheme arrangements as these will be closed to new members from that date. As matters now stand, officers wishing to continue to contribute to a police pension would be obliged to move into one of the new schemes on transfer.

In view of the need to ensure that currently serving police officers can continue to move between the PSNI and GB police forces as at present, the Government (in consultation with Scottish Ministers) have decided that the current police pension schemes across the United Kingdom should be unified. I therefore intend to seek parliamentary approval to amend the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, and the Police Pensions Act 1976 to allow the pension schemes to be formally merged. This will allow officers serving at present, who transfer on or after 6 April to remain in the current pension scheme on permanent transfer, should they so wish. This will apply to police officers serving in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who are members of the current pension scheme on 6 April.

Later this year serving officers will have the opportunity to move across to a new police pension scheme. Today's announcement is to clarify the position for those officers who might not wish to join a new police pension scheme, but who may wish to apply for posts elsewhere in the United Kingdom to gain experience or promotion.

After the current pension schemes in Northern Ireland and Great Britain have been merged, police officers in post before 6 April would be able to transfer from Northern Ireland to Great Britain, and vice versa, without having to move into the new pension arrangements. However, as the parliamentary process necessary to merge the schemes will take some time, the Government propose that officers transferring between the PSNI and GB forces in the interim will be able to do so under conditions which enable them to remain in the current arrangements. It is envisaged that these interim transfer conditions will last up to three years.

Review of Public Administration

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I am today announcing the final outcome of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) in Northern Ireland. My previous announcement of 22 November 2005 dealt with local government, education and the major health and social services bodies. Today I want to deal with the remaining Executive Agencies and Public Bodies, as well as a number of residual issues carried forward from the 22 November announcement.

In addition to the major organisations in local government, health and social services and education, there is a plethora of other bodies that fulfil a variety of roles in the overall system of public administration. These include 15 executive agencies, 39 Executive and 16 Advisory Non Departmental Public Bodies or QUANGOS and 11 Tribunals: a total of 81 public bodies.

A variety of views were expressed in the consultation process on the future of these executive agencies and public bodies. However, in general, the responses reflected a concern about the number of public bodies and a recognition of the need for improved accountability. While it is acknowledged that there is a role for quangos in the future arrangements for public administration in Northern Ireland, it is accepted that these should only be retained or established when there are clear advantages to the arm-length relationship.

I have now had time to reflect on all of the evidence and to take account of the views of the major stakeholders, including local government, to which significant extra functions will be transferred as a result of today's decisions. In order to streamline public administration, clarify accountability, and ensure public services are easily accessible and customer-focused, the total number of these bodies remaining will be reduced from 81 to 53. Taken together with the decisions that I announced in November 2005, this means an overall reduction in public bodies in Northern Ireland from 154 to 75—51 per cent. The changes announced in November and today will result in savings in excess of £200 million per annum, and demonstrate the Government's commitment to cutting waste and strengthening front-line services in Northern Ireland.

The changes I am announcing today will be achieved, in the main, by merging bodies or transferring complete functions to local government or Central Government. Many of the remaining bodies will have reduced responsibilities through some of their functions transferring to local government. All of the bodies that remain will be required to work with councils in the community planning process. Functions that are transferred to local government will be accompanied by an equivalent transfer of funding. To achieve this, a new system of local government financing will be developed.

Where there are a number of bodies carrying out related functions we propose to merge these into one new organisation, streamlining the delivery of those functions and saving overheads. There will be a new **Land and Property Services Agency** that will incorporate the Valuation and Lands, Rate Collection, Land Registers and Ordnance Survey Agencies. Similarly, in the area of the environment and heritage, key functions are currently spread across the Environment and Heritage Service, and the Rivers Agency, supported by four advisory bodies: the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Historic Buildings Council, the Historic Monuments Council and the Drainage Council. On 28 February 2006 we launched an independent review of environmental governance which we expect to result in the creation of an independent agency to deliver a comprehensive range of environmental functions.

I am also announcing the establishment of a new **regional library authority** that will have responsibility for all libraries across Northern Ireland. It will have the capacity to develop the service beyond purely educational needs, providing a valuable resource for the wider community and recognising that the library has cultural, recreational and community roles.

Other bodies will merge into existing organisations, reducing overheads and facilitating better joined-up working. The Northern Ireland Events Company will become part of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board; the Pig Production Development Committee will become part of the Livestock and Meat Commission, and five existing health bodies, namely, Health Estates, the Central Services Agency, the Mental Health Commission, the Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery, and the Medical and Dental Training Agency, will be merged into the new health and social services structures. Driver and Vehicle Licensing will merge with the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency, and the Construction Industry Training Board will amalgamate with the ConstructionSkills Sector Skills Council.

Other functions will be transferred to either central or local government, not only streamlining these functions but also clarifying lines of accountability. The functions of the Public Records Office, the Fisheries Conservancy Board and the civil service's internal consultancy service will transfer to their parent central government departments. The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority and the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland will transfer to local government, as will the Local Government Staff Commission once the new councils have been established. The delivery of rural development functions will also transfer to local government while the remaining policy development functions of the Rural Development Council will transfer to central government. Similarly the functions of the Northern Ireland Museums Council will transfer to local and central government. Once the new councils are established consideration will be given to the transfer of ILEX to the new council in the North West. The functions of the Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board will transfer to the equivalent GB body, whose remit will be extended.

A further number of bodies will cease to exist. These are: the Northern Ireland Housing Council, the Agriculture Wages Board and Enterprise Ulster.

Finally, local government will receive additional functions, and the accompanying funding, from some of the bodies that will remain. Some of the funding currently administered by the Arts Council and the Sports Council will become the responsibility of local government, as will some of the functions of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Invest Northern Ireland.

We believe that housing is essentially a local issue and for that reason we will consider the transfer of housing to local government at a future date, once the new councils are in place, fully operational and bedded in. In the meantime, however, while the Northern Ireland Housing Executive will remain, some of its non-core functions will transfer to local government when the new councils are established in 2009.

In recognition of the significant strengthening of local government within the context of a smaller number of councils, I have reconsidered my earlier decision to reduce the overall number of councillors to 50 per council, giving a total of 350. Instead, the Order that I will be putting before Parliament to direct the Local Government Boundary Commissioner, who will make the recommendation on the final number of wards for each council, will be on the basis of approximately 60 councillors per council, thus increasing overall councillor numbers to around 420 compared with 582 now.

It is essential that, for those public bodies which remain, accountability is clear. For the future, all Board members will be appointed under the guidelines laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Public bodies are accountable to their sponsoring Minister and through that Minister to the Assembly or Parliament. Board members must be chosen solely on the basis of the skills and expertise necessary to do the job. All appointments are to be made on merit and no one should be appointed to any position solely because they hold a particular position in another organisation.

There are a number of tribunals in Northern Ireland which deal with employment disputes and appeals arising from certain decisions taken by Government Departments and other public bodies. These are mainly funded and provided with administrative support by the Department responsible for the relevant area of policy. These arrangements have been considered in the light of reforms in England and Wales and of concerns about the independence of tribunals under their current administrative relationships with Departments. To secure greater independence and more streamlined administration, responsibility for the administration of those Tribunals currently sponsored by Departments will transfer to the Northern Ireland Court Service as part of a new Courts and Tribunals Service.

All of my decisions have been underpinned by consideration of the implications for equality, social need, good relations, human rights and rural communities. The local administration arrangements will provide an anchor for *A Shared Future* and ensure that good relations actions are earthed in the needs of local communities. There are clear expectations that my decisions will lead to improved accessibility to public services— particularly for those most vulnerable in our society—improvements in the diversity of people who participate in public life, and fair treatment for staff. I believe that these three issues should be a central part of the decisions taken within organisations, sectors and across the public sector as a whole during implementation.

The decisions I have announced on the RPA will cut costs and transfer resources from bureaucracy to front-line delivery of key public services.

I have today published a summary of the full range of decisions flowing from the RPA. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House. All of the evidence gathered as part of the research that led to the final decisions is published on the review website at www.rpani.gov.uk.

TRANSPORT

Northern Rail Franchise

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): I am today announcing the conclusions of the review of the Northern rail franchise. Copies of the consultant's report detailing their review will be placed in the House Library.

Northern Rail, one of the largest franchises, provides services across the north-east, north-west and Yorkshire and Humber. Passenger journeys have grown by 10 per cent. in the past 12 months, and now stand at more than 71 million passenger journeys each year and public performance measure is currently 89 per cent.

The projected public subsidy is £2.4 billion (in 2004 prices) for the 8¾ year period of the contract. Collectively, the five northern Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) are co-signatories to the agreement and sponsor the majority of Northern services.

The Strategic Rail Authority initiated a review in March 2005 with the purpose of reviewing the current timetable, which had not changed over several years, to ensure it meets present day demand and secures value for money for the taxpayer.

The review started with a comprehensive assessment of the franchise in its present form. It looked at the different markets served, current and future demand, revenue, costs, the number of trains being used and funding arrangements. It considered options for cost changes.

The review found that the franchise operates efficiently, with its trains allocated to meet the needs of peak time travel into the major towns and cities.

It found that revenue through fares, at 11p per passenger mile is lower than for other comparable rail operators. In the PTE areas, which account for 72 per cent. of passenger journeys, the figure is as low as 8p per passenger mile.

In the light of these findings, and the growth which the franchise is currently experiencing the Department has concluded that there is no compelling case for amending the current timetable or allocation of rolling stock. Service patterns will not change as a result of this review. The current levels of subsidy are also unaffected by this review.

There has been concern within the regions affected that the service review would lead to service cuts and fail to support predicted growth and economic development. We are committed to supporting current and future rail services in this franchise area and across the rail network. We will continue to work closely with Northern Rail and Passenger Transport Executives to make sure services meet future demand and that Government policy for the regions is supported.

Civil Aviation Authority (Price Control Review)

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): My Department has responded to the Civil Aviation Authority's Price Control Review consultation. The response makes the following points.

The economic regulation of London airports is, in general, supported by users. Regulation is designed to further the interests of airport users, promote efficient operation of airports and encourage investment in new airport facilities.

Air travel is essential to the United Kingdom's economy and to our continued prosperity. Airports are a key part of the country's strategic transport infrastructure and are important drivers of regional growth and employment. For these reasons, securing the delivery of the White Paper, "The Future of Air Transport" (Cm 6046), remains central to Government policy. This is most urgent in the south-east of England, where the White Paper recommends two additional runways be provided by 2030, with the first to be delivered as soon as possible at Stansted.

The Government therefore support the view, recently expressed by the CAA, that it is important that any owner of a London airport should recognise the significant near and medium-term investment requirements. This is likely to require the maintenance of credit quality sufficient to ensure the cost-effective financing of future investment.

The Government welcome the CAA's approach to the equitable sharing of surface access costs between aviation users and the public sector. The White Paper makes clear the importance of airport operators making a proportionate contribution to the costs of any road or rail improvements catering for airport-related traffic. The Government are actively considering these issues in respect of the London airports, and will keep the CAA informed.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pension Transfer Values

The Minister for Pensions Reform (Mr. Stephen Timms): When a person moves their pension rights from one scheme to another, a cash value is put on those pension rights and that cash sum is passed from one scheme to the other.

The Government have delegated to the actuarial profession the responsibility for specifying the framework within which actuaries must work when advising pension scheme trustees on the calculation of transfer values.

Recently the actuarial profession consulted on changes to their guidance on the calculation of transfer values. The consultation gave rise to a significant difference of view on the way forward.

The Government have been in discussion with the profession about the results of their consultation. We have now agreed with the profession that the time is right for the Government to set out the principles in legislation that should underpin the calculation of transfer values.

The Government intend to consult soon on draft regulations designed to reflect these principles.

Written Ministerial Statements

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TREASURY

Invest to Save Budget (Inclusive Communities)

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Des Browne): I am pleased to announce that a total of 30 bids from organisations spanning the public and voluntary sectors have been awarded funding for projects following the 8th annual bidding round of the Invest to Save Budget. A total of £26 million has been allocated over the three years to 2008–09 for England. The allocated sum rises to £31 million to include consequential funding for the devolved Administrations. Details of the winning projects have been placed in the Library of the House.

The Invest to Save Budget (ISB), set up following the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review, provides initial funding support for projects that increase the extent of joint working between different parts of the public sector; identify innovative ways of delivering public services; and reduce the cost of delivering the services and/or improve the quality and effectiveness of services delivered to the public.

This, the eighth bidding round through which ISB resources are allocated, concentrates on the priority areas of:

the third sector delivering public services—projects that deliver cash releasing efficiencies;

improved energy efficiency in public and third sector bodies; and

efficiency and increased access to the arts and culture.

Successful projects are required to agree a detailed implementation plan with the sponsor Departments, setting out how the project will be delivered. Each project must also provide six-monthly progress reports to sponsor departments and the Treasury and carry out an evaluation of the project's success once it has been completed. Wider dissemination of the good practice from completed projects is then fed back into the whole spectrum of public service providers.

I am also pleased to announce that there will be a 9th ISB bidding round held later in the year, with a focus on the third sector's role in building fairer communities and delivering public services. Full details of the round, including detailed bidding guidance and criteria, will be announced over the coming months.

More information can be found on the ISB website at www.isb.gov.uk.

Debt and Reserves Management Report 2006–07

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): The "Debt and Reserves Management Report 2006–07" is being published today. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

DEFENCE

Defence Holdings of Highly Enriched Uranium

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that our report on the production of highly enriched uranium for the defence programme and arms control verification has now been completed. Copies of the report will be placed in the Library of the House and published on the MOD website.

This follows a similar report on defence holdings of plutonium, published in 2000, and meets our commitment for historical accounting as set out in the strategic defence review. It is also intended to have the report circulated during the current session of the conference on disarmament in Geneva (which closes on 31 March 2006), as a contribution to wider consideration of these complex issues.

Its publication demonstrated our continuing determination to work constructively towards negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, our goal of the global elimination of nuclear weapons and our commitment to openness in Government.

Chemical Protection Programme

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): The UK's chemical protection programme is designed to protect against the use of chemical weapons. The United Kingdom is fully compliant with the Chemical Weapons Convention, under which such a programme is permitted. Under the terms of the Convention, we are required to provide information annually to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In accordance with the Government's commitment to openness, I am placing in the Library of the House a copy of the summary that has been provided to the Organisation outlining the UK's chemical protection programme in 2005.

Veterans Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The Ministry of Defence has recently completed a review of the Strategy for Veterans which was launched in March 2003. The review, which was undertaken in consultation with the ex-Service organisations. Government Departments and the Devolved Administrations, has confirmed that our broad approach to veterans issues holds good.

The three key pillars of our strategy remain:

To provide excellent preparation for the transition of service personnel back to civilian life;

To provide advice and support for those of our veterans who need it; and

To ensure that the nation recognises, understands and commemorates veterans' contribution in society.

Several aspects of the strategy have been updated and the review has also highlighted the importance of exploring ways to improve the effectiveness of our delivery and of effective communication.

The revised strategy, setting out our approach to veterans issues and what we aim to achieve through the Veterans' Programme, is published today.

A copy of the strategy has been placed in the Library of the House and can be found at www.veteransagency.mod.uk/vetstrategy/vetstrategy.pdf.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Fraud Review

The Solicitor-General (Mr. Mike O'Brien): My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General has made the following written ministerial statement:

> "On 27 October 2005 I announced to the House that the Government have commissioned a wide-ranging review of fraud. The review team has produced its interim report and I have today placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses.
>
> The full report is expected to be ready in the late spring".

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 23 March 2006

CABINET OFFICE

Election Guidance

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): Guidance has today been issued to civil servants on the principles which they should observe in relation to the conduct of Government business before the forthcoming elections to local authorities in England.

The guidance sets out the principles on the need to maintain the political impartiality of the civil service and the need to ensure that public resources are not used for party political purposes.

The guidance will come into force on 13 April ahead of the elections on 4 May.

Copies of the guidance have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and on the Cabinet Office website at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/propriety_and_ethics/publications/pdf/2006localelectionguidance.pdf

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Children Act

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): Further to the statement of 11 January made by my right hon. Friend Baroness Ashton of Upholland, I am pleased to announce the publication of the Cardiff university research into the operation of rule 9.5 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991 that was commissioned by my Department. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and may be accessed via the DCA website www.dca.gov.uk/mairepfr.htm

The Cardiff university researchers consulted with children and their families to obtain their views on being separately represented under rule 9.5 in Children Act 1989 court proceedings brought by their parents about future contact and/or residence. We wanted to understand the extent to which formal representation through a solicitor and guardian is meeting children's needs or whether there are other ways in which their needs can be met. The researchers focused on the features, both those which were beneficial and those which were adverse, of separate representation, alongside statistical evidence already in the public domain.

The research indicates that provisions for meeting children's needs could be improved. There are a number of important recommendations made in this research report. They include the need for the potential advantages of rule 9.5 to be secured earlier in proceedings; a call for greater judicial continuity in the hearing of cases; the proposal that children should have clear, reliable and age-appropriate information about their parents' separation/divorce from the beginning of proceedings; that children should have a "passage agent"—someone, apart from their parent(s), to support them through the court process; that there should be early identification of the features of the case which are likely to produce intractable behaviour on the part of parents; that the child should always be separately represented before making enforcement orders under the (eventual) Children and Adoption Act; and the need to implement changes to FamilyMan to record (i) if the tandem model was used (ii) who was appointed to represent the child and (iii) name of judge hearing the case.

The research report, alongside consideration of other research focusing on children's welfare and other statistical evidence, will be used to inform the making of rules of court under subsections 122 (1)(b) and (2) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. In the meantime, existing provisions for the representation of children remain in force, which continue to offer a range of ways in which the courts may ascertain children's wishes and feelings.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academies

The Minister of State for Schools (Jacqui Smith): The Secretary of State, in her response to Price Waterhouse Coopers' second annual evaluation report on the academies programme, announced proposals to align more closely investment in Academies with Building Schools for the Future (BSF). It has now been agreed that "Partnerships for Schools" (PfS) will have responsibility for the Academy building programme.

PfS is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) wholly owned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and managed and funded under a joint venture between the DfES and Partnerships UK (PUK). PfS was established in March 2004 to work with local authorities (LAs) and the private sector to rebuild or refurbish the secondary school estate. PfS is a national delivery vehicle for BSF, which is a government programme to renew all the secondary schools in England over a 15-year period. PfS ensures that secondary schools buildings are well-designed, built cost-effectively and on time, and that they are properly maintained. PfS does this by building strong Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), enabling the public sector to benefit from the best skills and expertise available in the private sector, and thereby achieving greater efficiencies and economies of scale.

Within the BSF programme education and design specialists from PfS work with LAs to create innovative and exciting learning environments for schools. In addition, the procurement and project management expertise which PfS provides also ensures that the programme is delivered effectively and that economies of scale are achieved, and that the BSF programme is delivered in the most cost-effective and efficient way. By including the delivery of Academy buildings within PfS's remit we will ensure that these aims and objectives are delivered for Academy buildings and ensure that academies are established as part of a strategic programme of investment for each LA. Closer integration of the two building programmes will also enhance the capacity of PfS to secure high standards and greater procurement efficiencies.

A standardised approach to procurement will both support these efficiencies and drive the creation of excellent educational environments which will make a major contribution to radically improving educational opportunities in areas of significant social and economic deprivation.

As a result of the closer integration of the academies building programme with BSF, there will be some technical changes to the way in which academy buildings are procured and constructed. The Department is currently working closely with PfS on the detail of how this closer integration will work. Our intention is to minimise any changes to the way PfS and LAs currently work together. The closer integration of the BSF and the academy building programmes will also support the sharing of good practice in building excellent learning institutions within both the Academies and BSF programmes.

HEALTH

Mental Health Bill

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): I should like to set out the Government's plans for a Mental Health Bill.

Mental health legislation is about the circumstances in which people with a mental disorder can be treated without their consent, in order to protect them and/or others from harm; and the processes that have to be followed if someone is to be treated without consent. The majority of people with a mental disorder will not require treatment under mental health legislation. At any point in time, one in six of the population has a common mental health problem. At 31 March 2004, there were about 14,000 patients who were being detained and treated in hospital for a mental disorder.

Through sustained investment and ongoing service reform, the mental health system is progressively achieving success in many areas. However, it is important that the present mental health legislation is amended to keep pace with changes in service delivery, to provide safeguards for patients and to prevent harm to individual patients and to the wider public.

We have spent the last seven years consulting on, discussing and redrafting the Mental Health Bill. The draft Bill achieves many of our intentions but we have been reviewing its length and complexity. We have listened to the Joint Committee and our stakeholders, and have looked again at the arguments about amending the Mental Health Act 1983.

As a result, we will introduce a shorter, streamlined Bill that amends the Act. It will reflect the impact of service modernisation and will provide legislation that is easier to understand and implement. It will also help deliver our other objectives: to promote patient safeguards and to protect patients and the public from harm.

The Bill to amend the 1983 Act will:

> introduce supervised treatment in the community for suitable patients following an initial period of detention and treatment in hospital. This will help ensure that patients comply with treatment and enable action to be taken to prevent relapse and readmission to hospital. The introduction of treatment in the community reflects modern service provision enabling patients to be treated according to their individual needs and circumstances;
>
> expand the skill base of professionals who are responsible for the treatment of patients treated without their consent;
>
> improve patient safeguards by taking order-making powers with regard to the Mental Health Review Tribunal. We are currently considering across Government the precise terms of the changes, and will continue to consult with stakeholders;
>
> reflect a widespread consensus and the views of the Joint Committee and will introduce a new, simplified single definition of mental disorder;
>
> keep, as recommended by the Joint Committee, the exclusion for drug and alcohol dependency, and preserve the effect of the Act as it relates to people with learning disabilities;
>
> replace the "treatability" test with a test that appropriate treatment must be available. Unlike the treatability test, the availability of appropriate treatment will be a requirement for all groups of patients, regardless of their particular diagnosis. This is important to ensure that patients are not brought under compulsory powers unless appropriate treatment is available;
>
> amend the current Act to remedy an European Court of Human Rights incompatibility in relation to the Nearest Relative. At the same time, we will bring the Act into line with the Civil Partnership Act 2004 in relation to the Nearest Relative provisions.

The Bill will be used as the vehicle for introducing the Bournewood safeguards, through amending the Mental Capacity Act 2005. These safeguards are for people who lack capacity and are deprived of their liberty but do not receive mental health legislation safeguards.

We will address safeguards for children treated on the basis of parental consent through the Children Act 1989. Children detained under the Mental Health Act will continue to receive the same safeguards as adults. We will also look at ways that we can continue to pursue other patient safeguards, such as advocacy, through other means.

We shall publish very soon a report on the outcome of the public consultation on Bournewood and the key features of our Bournewood proposals.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Uganda

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas): On 20 March I attended a ministerial meeting in Geneva to discuss how best the international community can help deal with the conflict in northern Uganda.

The UK has long been a committed member of the international community's effort to support humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution in Uganda. We have been one of the largest humanitarian donors in Uganda over the last five years—this year we have provided over £20 million in humanitarian assistance.

The 20-year long insurgency by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has destroyed lives and communities in northern Uganda and resulted in 1.7 million people living in camps for internally displaced people. The humanitarian situation in these camps is a cause of considerable concern—a WHO Health and Mortality survey in mid 2005 confirmed that the situation in the north is a humanitarian emergency.

Five LRA commanders have now had International Criminal Court arrest warrants issued for them. The UN Security Council agreed Resolution 1653 in January 2006, which identified the LRA as a threat to regional security. Mediation efforts have not made as much progress as we hoped they would. It is now time to redouble efforts to build a lasting and sustainable peace in northern Uganda.

At the meeting high-level delegations from the UK, US, Netherlands, Norway, and Canada sat down with various United Nation agencies as well as the Government of Uganda to discuss next steps.

The Ugandan government has primary responsibility to protect its citizens and to deal with the conflict and its humanitarian consequences. We welcome their willingness to work with international partners in doing this. A range of proposals for more political action and for alleviating the situation on the ground was discussed. These included improving coordination between the government of Uganda, UN agencies and others on the ground, and addressing issues such as conflict resolution, mitigating the effects of conflict, reintegration of formerly abducted children and ex-combatants, and humanitarian assistance.

A further meeting is planned in a few weeks time in Kampala to take forward these proposals.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Forestry

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): My Noble Friend Lord Rooker, the Minister of State for Northern Ireland has made the following ministerial statement:

The Government are pleased today to issue a written statement on Northern Ireland forestry policy and to publish a strategy for the growth and sustainability of forestry.

The Government would like to express thanks to the many people and organisations that replied to the consultation document "Options for Forestry". The responses will be published on the Forest Service's website at: www.forestserviceni.gov.uk.

The responses confirmed the almost universal desire for more forests and woodlands for a number of reasons. These include the desire to improve our environment through tree planting; the perception that tree planting would assist in addressing a need for greater public access to the countryside; and the belief that tree planting would create an economic resource that could be exploited for energy and timber production.

There are many reasons why the amount of forest is low in NI. Nevertheless, the Government's vision is that, in the long-term, the amount of forest should be doubled so that people in NI will have access to the same level of forestry benefits as are available in the rest of the UK. The Government would like the private sector to take the lead in this. This is a challenging aspiration, however recent changes in agriculture, notably reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the introduction of the Single Farm Payment, will provide additional confidence that forestry is a credible option for land use. To support this the Government will maximise the funding available under the Rural Development Regulation, subject to overall spending priorities.

The forestry strategy will be used to ensure that policies developed by different Departments are joined up. For example, DETI policies on developing renewable energy markets will create a demand for wood based energy, and forest design and management will support DOE policies on conserving biodiversity. The promotion of afforestation in areas close to settlements is also key in enabling the public to enjoy an improved quality of the environment.

The consultation paper pointed to the need to secure a balance of public benefits from forests. Government proposals to improve arrangements for forest management received a broad measure of support and these are adopted within the new Strategy. The more significant of these include:

> Improving the statutory basis for the work programmes to be carried out by the Department. The 1953 Forestry Act is focused on wood production, and the Department proposes making provision for other aspects of a modern forestry policy. The Act shall be amended so that the Department will be required to balance the needs for timber production, environmental protection and recreational access, which more accurately reflects the work actually done by the Forest Service to-day.
>
> Subject to this, the Government intend to create a statutory right of pedestrian access to most forests owned by the Department. This will complement the strategies promoted by local government and other public bodies to improve access to the countryside for recreation and tourism.
>
> It is intended that the Department gain statutory powers to regulate tree felling and forest regeneration, to regulate the use of minor public roads for forestry, and to improve control of forest dwelling animals. This will help maintain the overall area of forest in Northern Ireland; it will help industry gain access to timber on affordable terms consistent with road safety considerations; and it will ensure that there is scope for public authorities to take action where wild animal populations threaten the success of the forestry programme.
>
> There should also be fresh provision for the Department to compulsorily acquire land and ancillary rights over land. These powers will be used sparingly and in accord with the well-established rules for the use of such powers by the Civil Service.
>
> The Government also intend to promote greater private sector participation in forestry by disposing of some plantations and by taking powers to participate in partnership arrangements with the private sector and other bodies. The Department should also gain provisions to develop some of its land for non-forest use.

Most of these decisions will require amendments to the Forestry Act that will be introduced in due course. In the interim Government officials will take forward these proposals as far as possible within the existing legislation.

The Government have considered the functions undertaken by the forest service and the arrangements for delivery of the forestry programme. The service now has a core business that includes maintaining the supply of timber, the restoration of areas harvested for timber and verifying the sustainable management of forest. This includes provision for the protection and enhancement of the environment. Along with responsibility for forest recreation, these core programmes will continue to be delivered on a regional basis by the forest service as an agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development subject to the outcome of the review of Environmental Governance as announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 21 March 2006. In the meantime, the service should continue to focus on improving efficiency and effectiveness, and a series of measures to achieve this consistent with the Government's "Fit for Purpose" initiative have been approved. A small number of local government and other responses suggested it might be possible for the Department to work with them in developing local partnerships and this will be pursued.

The conclusions of the equality impact assessment carried out at the same time as the review had suggested that forest service policies largely had a positive impact on disadvantaged groups, and this has been endorsed by the responses received.

The development of forests and woods are important to the people of Northern Ireland. The strategy published by the forest service will create a vision for forest expansion and sustainable forest management that will ensure a lasting legacy will be handed on to future generations.

Credit Unions Annual Report 2005

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): In accordance with Article 81 of The Credit Unions (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and Section 100 of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, copies of the Credit Unions Annual Report 2005 have been placed today in the Libraries of both Houses.

Companies Registry Annual Report 2005

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): In accordance with article 677 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, copies of the Companies Registry Annual Report 2005 have been placed today in the Libraries of both Houses.

PRIME MINISTER

Ministers' Interests

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today appointed Sir John Bourn KCB as the independent adviser on Ministers' interests. He will provide advice to Ministers and permanent secretaries on the handling of Ministers' private interests as set out in Section 5 of the ministerial code.

Under the terms of the code, Ministers are required to provide their Permanent Secretaries with a list in writing of their interests which could give rise to a conflict of interest. As a matter of routine permanent secretaries will send Sir John Bourn copies of Ministers' disclosures with a note of any action agreed. He will also be sent any updates of the disclosures. This will allow Sir John to confirm that he is satisfied with the arrangements put in place.

It will, of course, remain the personal responsibility of Ministers to decide how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the code, and if necessary to justify their actions and conduct in Parliament.

Sir John is highly respected as the Comptroller and Auditor General and is ideally suited to the job of independent adviser on Ministers' interests. His impartiality and integrity are beyond reproach. I am delighted that Sir John has accepted the job which he starts with immediate effect.

Honours System

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today announced reforms to the state honours system which mean that I will not exercise my right as Prime Minister to nominate individuals directly for honours.

A new system of independent honours committees was established in 2005 following recommendations by Sir Hayden Phillips GCB and the Public Administration Select Committee. The committees are chaired by individuals from outside Government, with the majority of members from outside Government service. The committees' recommendations are considered by a main honours committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary and consisting of the chairs of all the independent committees. The Cabinet Secretary submits the agreed lists to me who, by law, is the principal adviser on honours to Her Majesty the Queen.

Under these reforms, my principal involvement in honours from this point will be in setting the strategic policy framework. This will involve giving a remit to the independent committees that consider nominations from Government Departments and the public as to the general direction of policy, including priority areas for recognition. From now on I shall forward the honours lists to the Queen without amendment.

These reforms have the agreement of the Queen and take immediate effect. The reforms involve no amendment to statute or to the exercise of the Royal Prerogative.

I have asked the Cabinet Office, in consultation with Departments, to consider the implications of these reforms for other parts of the honours process and to bring forward proposals in due course.

TRANSPORT

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I am pleased to announce the ministerial targets for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for 2006–07. The ministerial targets are:

1. In at least 96 per cent. of incidents, within five minutes of being alerted, take a decision on the appropriate search and rescue response and initiate action if necessary.

1a. Deliver the programme of planned inspections. *The MCA wil inspect vessels during 2006–07 in a targeted manner based on factors such as UK policy direction (small passenger vessels), EU policy (ro-ro passenger* *vessels) and/or risk, based on Marine Accident Investigation Branch statistics on accidents and deaths. Most categories fall into a yearly based regime while others, fishing vessels, are part of a longer term five-year inspection regime.*

2b. Carry out 95 per cent. of mandatory expanded inspections.

3. Work with ship owners so that no more than 3 per cent. of UK ships inspected under global port state control arrangements are detained, and the UK shipping register maintains a position on the Paris Memorandum of Understanding White List which is comparable to registers of a similar size and reputation.

4. In 2006–07, reduce the proportion of vessels suffering machinery failures (commercial ships and leisure craft) in the UK by increasing prevention activities, working with other relevant organisations.

5. In 2006–07, strengthen our evidence base by analysing all fatal incidents and serious maritime accidents, to inform our assessment of maritime safety risks and prioritise these to assist with future regulatory policy and planning, including the allocation of costs and resources to activities.

Development Targets:

6. As a category 1 responder, meet the provisions of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 on behalf of the Secretary of State, in so far as his functions include responsibilities to maritime and coastal emergencies (excluding the investigation of accidents).

7. Prepare for a review in 2007–08 of the implementation, effectiveness and impact of the comprehensive prevention strategy, using evidence based information to check the agency's direction in this area.

8. Work with other responders and providers to contribute to improvement of joined up approaches to civil resilience matters, and specifically develop with the Ministry of Defence a harmonised provision for search and rescue helicopters from 2012.

EU Transport Council (Bregenz)

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): The Austrian Presidency organised an informal meeting of transport Ministers, in Bregenz, Austria, on 2–3 March. The event was hosted by the Austrian Federal Minister for Transport and Innovation, Mr Hubert Gorbach, and I represented the United Kingdom.

The theme for the two-day meeting was road safety.

During the first session, the Transport Commissioner, M Jacques Barrot, presented the midterm review of the EU Road Safety Action Programme, which will be discussed at the Transport Council on 27 March. Mr Gorbach then presented the results of the Expert Meeting on Infrastructure Safety held in Vienna in January. In discussion the UK emphasised the need for effective collaboration and exchange of best practice between Member States, rather than legislation.

The second session, which took place at the Road Safety Training Centre in Röthis, was entitled "Crossing Borders in eSafety". Issues covered here were: driver training using vehicles with the most up-to-date equipment; testing of HGVs and passenger vehicles using the latest eSafety equipment and simulators; and other recent trends and innovations in the road safety field.

Two sessions on the second day covered road safety awareness campaigns in the EU. A number of Member States, including the UK, gave presentations on their experience and previous campaigns. There was a discussion of the benefits of sharing of national campaigns and how to overcome potential difficulties such as copyright. There was also a discussion about implementing a common Europe-wide road safety power campaign, on which the Commission will bring forward proposals.

Mr. Gorbach will report on the Bregenz event to the Transport Council in Brussels on 27 March.

EU Transport Council (Brussels)

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I will attend the first Transport Council of the Austrian presidency which takes place in Brussels on 27 March.

The main items on the agenda are: a debate on the draft regulation on public service obligations in passenger transport; a revised regulation on aviation security; progress reports on air transport negotiations with the USA, implementation of the European Single Sky (SESAR) and the Galileo satellite navigation project; and a debate on the EU strategy for sustainable development.

There will be a policy debate on the draft Public Service Obligation (PSO) regulation for public passenger transport services by rail and by road. The draft regulation sets out to ensure harmonised rules for granting of contracts to passenger transport operators, including rail operators, to provide public services. To focus the debate, the Austrian presidency will ask Ministers to address two multi-faceted questions.

The first set of questions concerns the provisions in the regulation relating to the direct award of contracts for transport services. Part one seeks a Ministerial view whether the provisions of Article 5(6), which provide for the possibility of directly awarding regional or long-distance rail transport services, should be extended to include suburban heavy rail services. The Council and Commission minutes statement tabled at the December Transport Council accepted the principle set out in Article 5(6) but the Government will strongly oppose any further extension. The Government will argue that the inclusion of suburban rail services would effectively prevent the opening of the entire rail market in perpetuity.

Similarly the Government will firmly oppose the extension of the principle of direct award to all transport modes, which is the focus of the second part of the question. The UK will argue that an extension of the principle of direct award to all transport modes is against the principles of the Treaty. We will argue that it is diametrically opposite to the European Council statement in 2000 that called for the speeding up of liberalisation in areas such as transport. And we will argue that any extension of the principle of direct award makes a regulation that should be enabling some increase in liberalisation, largely worthless. At this stage we expect a majority of Member States and the Commission to oppose strongly extending Article 5(6) to all transport modes.

Finally on this section of questions the Government will support the proposition, couched as a question by the presidency, that measures should be put in place to prevent operators in receipt of direct awards from competing in open markets elsewhere in order to prevent distortions of competition.

The proposed regulation also provides for the continuation of public service contracts awarded on the basis of a fair competitive tendering procedure and of a limited duration comparable to the durations proposed in the regulation, until they expire. The second question asks Ministers whether other sorts of existing contracts should be allowed to continue until their expiry date, in particular considering the manner in which these contracts have been allocated and their duration. The Government will argue that contracts put in place before the first Commission proposal for a regulation in this area (26 July 2000) should be allowed to remain in place until they expire provided that they were awarded on the basis of a fair competitive tendering procedure and therefore in conformity with Community law that existed at that time.

We will argue that there are legitimate expectations, legal and financial implications and potentially even human rights concerns that contracts awarded on this basis should remain in place.

Road safety is on the agenda in two parts. The Commission will present its mid-term review of the EU Road Safety Action programme. The review concludes that progress in reducing deaths on roads within the EU was faster in the period 2001–05 than previously, but that the rate of progress is not sufficient to meet the Action Programme's target of a 50 per cent. reduction by 2010, and calls for a renewed effort. The Government welcome the mid-term review and the emphasis in the Action Programme on making progress through collaboration and cooperation rather than European legislation. The Commission has indicated that it will be considering proposals for legislation.

The presidency will make a statement on the informal meeting of Ministers held in Austria in early March, which I attended on behalf of the UK. The meeting covered road safety awareness campaigns, driver training, vehicle technology, and latest trends in research and innovation.

There will be two presentations on inland waterways. The Commission will present its recent communication on the promotion of inland waterways. The Communication sets out an action programme—called NAIADES (Navigation and Inland Waterway Action and Development in Europe)—to boost Inland Waterway transport in order to reduce traffic congestion and harmful effects on the environment. While the Communication does not contain any legislative proposals, it does look at the different options for modernising the regulatory environment. The time frame for the implementation of the plan is the period 2006–13. The Austrian presidency will also report on the findings of a High Level Meeting on inland navigation, which considered the Communication in February.

In regard to aviation security, the Council will be aiming to reach a General Approach on the regulation to replace the existing regulation 2320/02. The new proposal would help to clarify, simplify, and further harmonise legal requirements with the aim of enhancing overall security in civil aviation. The Austrian presidency has indicated that they will be aiming for the Council to reach a general approach, which the Government supports.

There will be a progress report on SESAR, the project for implementation of the Single European Sky (air traffic management). This will be on the basis of a recent Commission communication and a draft regulation on the establishment of a project management group. The regulation is subject to the consultation procedure, and co-decision with the European Parliament does not apply. The Government support the SESAR project as it will allow for an integrated approach to the development of the new generation European air traffic management system involving all parts of the industry. However, the Government also have a number of concerns which have yet to be resolved, in particular, the governance structure, scope and funding of the Joint Undertaking.

The third aviation item covers two aspects of aviation external relations. The Commission will report on the state of play on EU-US negotiations for an air transport agreement. Progress was made during the talks last autumn with the US, and we now await the outcome of a US rule-making process on airline control before we can evaluate whether what is proposed goes far enough to make the Stage One deal on the table acceptable. A decision may be possible at a Council later this year. The second external relations issue is Siberian overflight payments. A solution to this issue has been sought for several years.

There will be Council Conclusions and the Council will consider a specific mandate to allow the Commission to take forward negotiations with Russia.

The Commission will report on the key elements of the concession contract for the Galileo satellite navigation project. The Government will argue strongly for a robust PPP which is affordable for the Community.

There will be a policy debate on the current review of the EU strategy for sustainable development. The Environment Council has been asked to lead on a report for the June European Council, but ten other Council formations, including the Transport Council, have been asked to provide input on the basis of a unified set of questions.

Among the "A" points for agreement at the Transport Council is the draft recast directive on driving licences for which a text was endorsed at the preparatory meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Member States (COREPER) on 15 March 2006. Whilst the Government support much of what is included in the text it is concerned about the proposals on motorcycle staging. The Government consider that the system proposed on motorcycle staging will create significant difficulty for our motorcyclists, with no tangible benefit for road safety in the UK. I therefore intend to enter a minutes statement reiterating the UK's disappointment that it has been impossible to reach agreement on a better approach to motorcycling staging.

The most significant of the Any Other Business items are:

A report from the Commission on the follow-up to its withdrawal of the proposal on access to port services;

A report from the Commission on a new proposal for enhancing supply chain security; and

A report from the Commission on the recent proposal for the promotion of clean road vehicles.

Railways for All Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): I have today launched the "Railways for All Strategy" which explains how the rail industry will improve access for disabled people. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The strategy describes what the rail industry is doing to improve access for disabled people. It considers all parts of a journey including how the industry will improve the way it provides information, removing barriers to access stations and further refinements in the specification of trains.

A key objective of this strategy is to improve the accessibility of our stations and in support of this, the Government announced last year ring-fenced expenditure of over £370 million through to 2015. This investment is known as the "Access for All" funding and is over and above commitments made in franchises, the ongoing renewal of stations and major station improvement projects.

The "Access for All" funding is split into two parts:

Around £35 million per year is targeted at improving access to and within stations and to all platforms which would improve the accessible route and make the stations step-free. The strategy explains how we have prioritised this investment. These improvements will be targeted at the busiest non step-free stations and will be delivered by Network Rail.

Up to £7 million per year is available as small schemes funding and is targeted at less busy or rural stations where small improvements can go a long way to improving access. From today, bids are invited from train operating companies, local authorities and other parties, and will be assessed against stated appraisal criteria.

The stations which are planned to be delivered over the next three years by Network Rail can be downloaded today from www.dft.gov.uk/access. It is also intended that those stations which will receive small schemes funding will be listed here in due course.

As a rail industry, all parties need to work together to continue to deliver the access improvements many disabled people need. The "Railways for All Strategy" is all about delivering a railway for the 21st century that disabled people feel more comfortable, more secure and more confident in using.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 27 March 2006

CABINET OFFICE

Directgov

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): As part of a review being conducted by Sir Gus O'Donnell, the Cabinet Secretary, into the role and functions of the Cabinet Office, the central operation and support functions for Directgov, and the 17 civil service posts providing them, will move to the Central Office of Information (COI) with effect from 1 April 2006.

COI already provides valuable support to Directgov and this transfer will provide a better longer-term location for this work including a wider pool of professional skills on which to draw. Nevertheless, Directgov remains key to Transformational Government, so strategic leadership will stay in the Cabinet Office.

TREASURY

Budget Resolution 61

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): It has been drawn to my attention that there was an inadvertent error in Budget Resolution 61. This resolution should have read as follows:

"That.

(1) Part 4 of the Finance Act 2003 shall be amended as follows.

(2) Section 64A shall be omitted.

(3) In section 101—

(a) in subsection (1) for "provisions" there shall be substituted "provision",

and

(b) in subsection (7) the words from "section 53" to "companies, or" shall be omitted.

(4) This resolution shall have effect in relation to any land transaction of which the effective date is, or after, 22 March 2006 (but see paragraphs (5) and (6)).

(5) This resolution shall not have effect in relation to—

(a) any land transaction which is effected in pursuance of a contract entered into and substantially performed before 2 pm on 22 March 2006 ("the relevant time"), or

(b) any other land transaction which is effected in pursuance of a contract entered into before the relevant time and which is not an excluded transaction.

(6) For this purpose, a land transaction effected in pursuance of a contract is an excluded transaction if—

(a) any provision of the contract has effect by reference to a unit trust scheme and the scheme is not established before the relevant time,

(b) at or after the relevant time the contract is varied in a way that significantly affects the land transaction (see paragraph 7),

(c) the subject matter of the land transaction is not identified in the contract in a way that would have enabled its acquisition before the relevant time,

(d) rights under the contract are assigned at or after the relevant time,

(e) the land transaction is effected in consequence of the exercise, at or after the relevant time, of any option, right of pre-emption or similar right, or

(f) at or after the relevant time there is an assignment, subsale or other transaction (relating to the whole or part of the contract's subject-matter) as a result of which a person other than the purchaser under the contract becomes entitled to call for a conveyance to him.

(7) For the purposes of paragraph (6)(b) the contract is varied in a way that significantly affects the land transaction if (and only if)—

(a) it is varied so as to substitute a different purchaser in relation to the land transaction,

(b) it is varied so as to alter the subject-matter of the land transaction, or

(c) it is varied so as to alter the consideration for the land transaction.

(8) Expressions which are used in part 4 of the Finance Act 2003 and in this resolution have the same meaning in this resolution as in that part.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968".

The corrected text will appear in today's Order Paper.

DEFENCE

655 Squadron Army Air Corps

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I would like to inform the House that we will disband 655 Squadron Army Air Corps (AAC), the Northern Ireland (NI) based Lynx light utility helicopter squadron, by April 2007. There are no military or civilian redundancies anticipated as a result of the disbandment.

This decision has been taken for two reasons. First, we need to reduce the size of the Lynx fleet (which will leave service in 2012). This will facilitate better focus of resources on sustaining and improving the remaining fleet until the arrival of its replacement in the form of the battlefield reconnaissance helicopter, which will be delivered as part of the future rotorcraft capability programme.

Secondly, the ongoing normalisation process in NI and the increasing ability of the Police Service of Northern Ireland to operate without military assistance means that the requirement for light utility helicopter support, currently provided by 655 Squadron AAC, is reducing and is expected to end completely by August 2007. The anticipated levels of aviation support required after April 2007 do not warrant the retention of a dedicated Lynx Squadron in NI beyond that date. Any residual requirement for helicopter support between April and August 2007 will be provided by other aircraft remaining in NI and mainland-based Lynx.

This decision means that we can reduce the size of the Lynx fleet, better focus our resources and still sustain the current six deployable squadrons of Lynx to support expeditionary operations.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I have today laid before the House a White Paper "Further Education: Raising Skills—Improving Life Chances" which sets out the Government's plans for the reform of further education.

There is much to be proud of in our further education system. We have many excellent colleges and training providers. Participation in education and training has risen significantly since 1997. Success rates are rising. Our 14–19 and skills strategies have set the country on the road towards a coherent, accessible, high-quality system of lifelong learning which meets the needs both of employers and of individuals.

But we cannot stand still. Major challenges remain if we are to ensure a high level skills base which matches and exceeds that of other high-performing economies. The FE sector is central to delivering the skills which are essential for economic success and which give individuals of all backgrounds and aspirations the basis for productive, sustainable employment and prosperity.

The White Paper sets out a comprehensive programme of change which will transform our FE system into a powerhouse of economic prosperity and social mobility. In developing our proposals, we have listened to the sector and the needs of its users, through Sir Andrew Foster's excellent review of the role of colleges and through widespread consultation with employers, providers and other key stakeholders. We have accepted, and are building on, the vast majority of Sir Andrew's recommendations.

Our plans will ensure:

A new economic mission for FE: the heart of the sector's role should be equipping young people and adults with the skills for employability which underpin both economic success and social mobility.

World class specialised vocational learning, driven by the needs of employers, including the strengthening of Centres of Vocational Excellence and the development of vocational sector networks.

Responsiveness to employers and learners: giving learners and employers greater say in the provision of education and training, more choices, and the tools to make the most of these opportunities. That includes expansion of work-based training to meet employer needs, and trialling a new accounts programme for adults.

New entitlements: introducing a new entitlement to free tuition and support to help 19–25 year-olds gain technician, associate professional and skilled trades qualifications at level 3, and over time and as resources allow we intend to extend this entitlement so that it can include programmes within the foundation learning tier that support progression through to level 2 and beyond.

New freedoms for high performing colleges, coupled with tougher, faster intervention to combat poor performance. Quality will be improved through new styles of delivery, including federations, collaborative partnerships, and trusts. There will be a new quality improvement strategy offering an integrated approach to quality development and improvement across the sector.

Reduced bureaucracy and less regulation, and a new relationship with colleges which releases their energy, initiative and dynamism, whilst ensuring that they are accountable for their performance.

Opportunities both for new high quality providers to enter the system, and for existing providers with a strong track record to expand.

A funding system which is driven by the choices and needs of learners and employers. Within local authorities' strategic leadership role for children's services overall, local authorities and the LSC will work closely together to drive progress through a shared strategy for delivering the 14–19 entitlement in every area.

A fairer playing field for capital funding available to schools and colleges, and a capital strategy that delivers the 14–19 reforms and supports the plans set out in the White Paper.

New investment announced in this White Paper and by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer last week will target the Government's priorities for FE including:

£25 million from 2007–08 to fund a 19–25 entitlement to first full level 3.

£11 million from 2007–08 to allow the full national rollout of the adult learning grant to be brought forward to 2007–08.

£11 million from 2007–08 for new programmes to recruit and train excellent staff for the FE sector.

£20 million to address the skills and training obstacles faced by women, as identified by the Women and Work Commission. That will extend support for women in training at level 3, expand the availability of skills coaches to support women in entering employment, and develop new recruitment routes into industries where women are under-represented.

These reforms will build a further education system fit to meet the challenges of economic and social change, and to achieve its full potential as the powerhouse of a productive, competitive economy and a just, inclusive society.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Gibraltar

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I wish to make a statement to the House informing members about the Gibraltar constitutional negotiations, which concluded successfully in London on Friday 17 March.

A joint statement by the UK and Gibraltar was made earlier today, which sets out the main provisions of the new constitution. The full text of the new constitution will be published in the coming weeks, and put to the people of Gibraltar in a referendum. If it is approved by them, it will then be given effect by Order in Council.

As I set out in my statement of 6 February 2004, the starting point for the work to modernise Gibraltar's 1969 constitution was the invitation in the 1999 White Paper "Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories" to OT Governments to submit proposals for constitutional reform. In July 1999, the Gibraltar House of Assembly constituted a Select Committee to report on constitutional reform. The Committee published its proposals in January 2002. We formally received them in December 2003. These proposals were subsequently discussed between delegations from the UK and Gibraltar in November/December 2004, September 2005 and March 2006.

The new constitution provides for a modern and mature relationship between Gibraltar and the UK. As I will make clear in the Despatch that I will send to the Governor at the time that the Order in Council is passed, it does not in any way diminish British sovereignty of Gibraltar. The UK will retain its full international responsibility for Gibraltar, including for Gibraltar's external relations and defence, and as the member state responsible for Gibraltar in the European Union. Gibraltar will remain listed as a British Overseas Territory in the British Nationality Act of 1981, as amended by the British Overseas Territory Act 2002.

The preamble to the new constitution will also make clear that the UK stands by its long-standing commitment that Gibraltar will remain part of Her Majesty's dominions unless and until an Act of Parliament otherwise provides, and furthermore that Her Majesty's Government will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes.

The new constitution confirms that the people of Gibraltar have the right of self-determination and that the realisation of this right must be promoted and respected in conformity with the provisions of the UN Charter and any other applicable international treaties. In the Despatch, I will note that, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, Gibraltar's right of self determination is not constrained by the Treaty of Utrecht except in so far as Article X gives Spain the right of refusal should Britain ever renounce sovereignty. Thus independence would be an option only with Spanish consent.

The remainder of the constitutional text introduces substantial reform and modernisation. The main elements include limiting the responsibilities of the Governor to the areas of external affairs, defence, internal security and the public service, thereby reversing the previous practice and giving Gibraltar much greater control over its internal affairs. The House of Assembly will be restyled the Gibraltar Parliament, and may determine its own size. The Governor's powers to withhold assent on laws passed by Gibraltar are streamlined and my power to disallow them is removed (although the power to make Orders in Council is retained). New commissions will be created to handle appointments in the judiciary and public service. The creation of a new Police Authority for Gibraltar will give Gibraltar a greater input into policing matters. Finally, the Human Rights chapter has been updated to bring it into line with the ECHR.

I have written to Miguel Angel Moratinos, the Spanish Foreign Minister, to clarify those matters of importance to Spain relating to this constitution.

I warmly welcome the text of the new constitution. I believe that it is a clear demonstration of our enduring commitment to the people of Gibraltar and that it represents the development of a modern, mature and appropriate relationship with the people of Gibraltar. I believe that the whole House will wish to commend it wholeheartedly to the people of Gibraltar.

I am placing copies of my letter to Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos and the UK/Gibraltar joint statement on the constitutional talks in the Library of the House.

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, Sir John Grant (UK permanent representative to the EU) and I represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 20 March 2006.

The agenda items were covered as follows:

European Council, 23/24 March 2006

The presidency invited the Council to comment on the draft European Council conclusions. The European Council will focus on its annual review of the strategy for growth and jobs agreed at Lisbon in March 2000 and re-launched last spring.

The presidency agreed to issue revised conclusions in light of the Council discussion.

World Trade Organisation/Doha Development Agenda

Commisioner Mandelson briefed the Council on progress in the WTO Round following the G6 ministerial in London 10–12 March. The Commission would now look to increase contact with key partners and Mandelson called for member states' assistance in contacts with third countries.

Western Balkans

The Council adopted draft conclusions welcoming discussion at the EU-Western Balkans Informal Foreign Ministers' meeting in the margins of the Gymnich (EU Foreign Ministers' informal meeting) and renewing calls for Serbia and Montenegro to co-operate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Draft conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina reflected the need for her to fulfil Stabilisation and Association Agreement conditions (legislative and administrative capacity, police and public broadcasting reform and ICTY) as well as the need for progress on constitutional reform.

Iraq

The Council welcomed the inaugural session of the Council of Representatives on 16 March, noting efforts to form a Government of national unity.

The Council adopted a mandate authorising the Commission to begin to negotiate a Trade and Co-operation Agreement with Iraq as soon as a Government was in place.

Iran

The presidency noted that the UN Security Council was considering appropriate steps to strengthen the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). High Representative Solana informed the Council that the Secretariat was working on a paper for the April Council on EU-Iran relations.

The Council adopted conclusions expressing concern at Iran's continuing failure to co-operate fully with IAEA while also underlining other areas of long-standing concern such as terrorism, Iran's approach to the Middle East Peace Process and respect for human rights. The conclusions also welcomed the recent release of Akbar Ganji, condemned his detention and treatment while in prison and called on the Iranian authorities to release all other prisoners of conscience immediately and unconditionally.

Middle East Peace Process

The presidency updated the Council on recent meetings with Egyptian President Mubarak and Palestinian President Abbas in Vienna.

High Representative Solana also briefed the Council on his assessment of the situation.

The Foreign Secretary briefed the Council on the withdrawal of UK and US monitors from the Jericho Monitoring Mission.

Sudan

High Representative Solana set out the case for continuing and strengthening EU engagement on Sudan/Darfur.

The Council adopted conclusions reiterating its deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in Darfur; welcoming the decision to extend the mandate of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) until 30 September 2006 and set a framework for a transition from AMIS to a UN operation in Darfur. On Abuja, the Council agreed the need for increased pressure on the parties to make more rapid progress.

Lebanon

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora briefed the Council on the current situation in Lebanon, including the achievements of the national dialogue.

The Foreign Secretary and French Foreign Minister reiterated the EU's support for Prime Minister Siniora and his Government, in particular in implementing political, economic and security reforms.

The Council adopted conclusions reaffirming its full support for the Government of Lebanon, encouraging it to implement economic and political reforms and implement fully UN Security Council resolution 1559.

AOB—Belarus

The Council discussed the presidential election in Belarus on 19 March.

The Council agreed with the assessment of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission that the election was severely flawed; agreed to begin urgent consideration of restrictive measures against those responsible; and urged the Belarusian authorities to allow the people of Belarus to exercise their right of assembly and freedom of expression.

AOB—Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Council discussed a response to the UN request for EU support to the UN Mission in DRC (MONUC) during the forthcoming electoral period. High Representative Solana briefed the Council on his recent meeting with President Kabila where the latter accepted, in principle, the deployment of a small EU force.

There was general agreement among partners to respond positively to the UN request. The presidency agreed to take planning forward on this basis.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Christopher Alder

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): In April 2004 my predecessor required the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), under section 79(1) of the Police Act 1996, to undertake a review of the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Christopher Alder. This was in response to continuing concerns from Mr. Alder's family. Hon. Members will recall his tragic death in police custody at Queen's Gardens police station in Hull during the early hours of 1 April 1998 with his last moments of life captured on CCTV.

I am today laying the report of the IPCC review before Parliament as I am required to do under section 79(5) of the Act. I would like to thank Nick Hardwick, Chair of the IPCC, and his team for his thorough review, and for his findings and recommendations. The IPCC sought the assistance of the Health Care Commission in assessing the standards of medical care which Mr. Alder received and a summary of the HCC conclusions is provided at annex 8 to the IPCC report. I understand that separate arrangements are being made to publish their report today.

There are criticisms of individual officers for their handling of Mr. Alder when they arrived at the scene of his assault, at the hospital to which he was taken and at the police station. They are criticised for some of the accounts of their actions which the IPCC, having reviewed the evidence, does not accept. They are criticised as public servants for not cooperating with the review, although I acknowledge that this was their right.

The IPCC find that unwitting racism was a factor in Mr. Alder's treatment measured against the standards subsequently established by the Macpherson report and the guidance issued by the former Police Complaints Authority (PCA). They acknowledge that Humberside police have made progress on racial awareness since. I return to this.

The former Deputy Chief Constable of Humberside police is criticised for his decision that there should be no legal representation available to the parties at the disciplinary tribunal which was set up to hear the charges against the five police officers, which had the effect of reducing the disciplinary sanctions available to the tribunal. In the absence of legal support the current Chief Constable of Cleveland, who approached his responsibilities properly, mistakenly accepted a submission that there was no case to answer.

The West Yorkshire investigation into Mr. Alder's death, which was supervised by the PCA, is criticised as being inadequately resourced and directed.

Additionally, there is criticism of Humberside police for not having apologised to the family of Christopher Alder for his treatment.

The IPCC find that support for the family was mishandled. There is criticism of the police and, to a degree, of the PCA for the level of support provided to the family (though it is acknowledged that things would be better handled these days). Lancashire Constabulary, one of whose officers passed on incorrect information to Mr. Alder's sister, gets passing criticism.

On the other hand, the review found no reason to believe that the police assaulted Mr. Alder, used CS spray against him or that his sister was subsequently harassed by Humberside police. It finds no evidence that Humberside deliberately mishandled their investigation, nor reason to criticise the handling of the failed prosecution of the police officers. It dismisses the suggestion of police cover up of evidence of racist banter. Any failings in the West Yorkshire investigation were not deliberate or malicious.

The IPCC is satisfied on the basis of its review that there is no need for a further inquiry.

The IPCC makes a number of recommendations. At this stage I wish to focus on three areas:

The police service response to racism following the Macpherson report;

efforts to improve the standards of care for those coming in to police custody; and,

plans to improve the police disciplinary process.

I found particularly disturbing the conclusion Mr. Hardwick reaches regarding the officers' "unwitting racism" in their treatment of Mr. Alder. However, I am confident that since Sir William Macpherson's inquiry into the tragic death of Stephen Lawrence in 1999, all police forces have taken steps to eradicate racism within the police service. However, we must not lose sight of the continuing need to ensure that those in the public service who serve their communities do so to the highest professional standards

The Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities and Centrex published "A Strategy for Improving Performance in Race and Diversity 2004–09" in November 2004. Also in November 2004 the Association of Police Authorities issued guidance on Involving Communities in Police Learning and Development.

The strategy is the product of extensive consultation and sets out a five year strategy for the Police Race and Diversity Learning and Development Programme. The strategy builds upon recommendations made in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC's) report "Diversity Matters" and responds to two independent reports commissioned to quality assure, and examine the effectiveness of, community and race relations (CRR) training. The strategy is fundamentally different from the previous approach to CRR training. Race necessarily remains the primary focus but the strategy expands the area of work to include other aspects of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and religion and belief. It extends to police staff and to the wider police family, including special constables and police community support officers (PCSOs).

The strategy is not just restricted to training and is linked to other police learning and development programmes, including the initial Police Learning and Development Programme, the Core Leadership Development Programme and the Senior Leadership Development Programme.

Much hard work has been put into improving the care and custody of people in police detention since this tragedy, and eight years on a number of important changes have been made

The safer detention guidance, published on 8 February 2006, requires that before accepting a detainee to return to custody, the escorting officers should request that the doctor immediately in charge of the detainee or the A&E manager provide clear written advice to inform the detainee's care plan. The custody officer must consider any requirement for a healthcare professional to see them in person on return from hospital. The healthcare professional must be called for certain aspects of illness which are set out in the guidance. The police healthcare project, a joint project being developed by the Home Office and the Prison Service, will look to develop national agreements for local implementation.

Improved police disciplinary arrangements are being considered in the context of work being taken forward in response to the Taylor report: a code of professional standards and an improved discipline procedure are being formulated. A proposed draft code and guidance have already been drawn up and are currently open to public consultation. It is our commitment to provide the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales with draft policy proposals in July.

I am confident in the ability of the police service and of the Chief Constable of Humberside police to respond positively to the IPCC findings.

There have been calls for a public inquiry into Mr. Alder's death which have been resisted. There has been an investigation, an inquest, criminal trial, internal disciplinary hearings and now this independent review. I agree with Mr. Hardwick when he says that a further investigation would not add anything of substance. This review contains a detailed account of all of the circumstances surrounding the death of Christopher Alder. I hope that the findings go some way to answering their questions and concerns and can bring them some closure to this tragic case. Our thoughts are with them today.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 28 March 2006

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Launch of the Tribunals Service and Performance Targets (2006–07)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, has made the following written ministerial statement:

"On 1 April 2006, I will launch the Tribunals Service. The new agency brings together the tribunals already administered by DCA with five others from across central Government. It is the culmination of a major programme of work that has involved extensive engagement with tribunals, other Government Departments and stakeholders to ensure a seamless transition and minimal disruption to users. The formation of the agency is the first major shake-up of the UK tribunals system for over fifty years and will ensure the manifest independence of the tribunals from those whose decisions they are reviewing.

The Tribunals Service will work to make the whole system of administrative justice more efficient, effective and accessible for users. Over time, it will test a range of methods of dispute resolution to create a service that ensures the public can get their problems addressed by the most suitable means.

The following table sets out the key performance targets which I have set for the Tribunals Service for 2006–07:

Tribunal	*Key Performance Indicators*	*Target*
Employment Tribunals Service	The percentage of single Employment Tribunal cases where the hearing begins within 26 weeks of receipt	75%
	The minimum percentage of above target to be achieved by individual regional offices	65%
	The average time taken to issue the decision of the employment tribunal to the applicant following the tribunal hearing.	4 weeks
Employment Appeals Tribunal	The percentage of Appeals listed for a first hearing within 26 weeks of receipt	75%
Appeals Service	The average time from the receipt of an appeal from the original decision-making agency to the first tribunal hearing	11 weeks
	The average time for a rehearing of a case returned from the Social Security Commissioner following an appeal against the original tribunal	8 weeks
Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (shared with Home Office)	The percentage of substantive asylum applications including the final appeal that is decided within 6 months	75%
Criminal Injuries and Compensation Appeals Panel (CICAP)	The percentage of cases where a decision on eligibility for compensation is issued from receipt of the ready-to-list bundle provided by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)	75% in 6 months 95% in 12 months
	The Percentage of both eligibility and quantum (value) cases that are to be resolved within:	
	6 months	65%
	12 months	90%
	2 years	98%
	Number of appeals resolved per hearing day	6
Mental Health Review Tribunal	The average time taken from the date of receipt of the application to the date when the notification of the written decision is received by the applicant for:	
	Section 2 (Mental Health Act 1983) cases	7 days
	Section 3 (Mental Health Act 1983) cases	5 weeks
	Restricted cases	14 weeks
Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal	The average time taken from the date of receipt of the application to the date when the notification of the written decision is received by the applicant	4.3 months
	The percentage of:	
	Cases registered,	96%
	Case statements processed,	96%
	Decisions issued, within 10 working days	80%

Copies of the Tribunals Service framework document and the Business Plan for 2006–07 have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses."

Public Guardianship Office (Key Performance Indicators and Targets 2006–07)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs, my noble Friend the Baroness Ashton of Upholland, has made the following written ministerial statement.

"The following list sets out the key performance targets that have been set for the Public Guardianship Office for 2006–07.

KPI 1: To increase the satisfaction of its customers in the delivery of its services as measured by customer surveys throughout the year.

Targets:

(a) To achieve an overall satisfaction rating of 75 per cent.

(b) To reduce dissatisfaction amongst each of the PGO's different customer groups (lay, local authority and professional receivers, and EPA attorneys) by 10 per cent.

KPI 2: To increase the proportion of effective visits by the Lord Chancellor's Visitors.

Targets:

Effective visits

(a) To achieve 80 per cent. effective visits over the year. An effective visit is one where:

(i) the visit is carried out within six months of the request being made; and

(ii) recommended action is initiated within one calendar month of the visit.

New clients

(b) To visit all new clients within six months of the Order appointing the Receiver being sent and to initiate any necessary action arising from the visit within one calendar month.

(c) To visit 10 per cent. of clients within 12–18 months of a Short Order direction.

Existing clients

(d) To undertake visits to existing clients as follows:

- (i) 10 per cent. of clients within 18 months of a Case Transfer direction;
- (ii) annually where the Chief Executive of the PGO is the receiver;
- (iii) a repeat visit after three years where the receiver is still in place;
- (iv) a repeat visit when necessary based on recommendations made by a Lord Chancellor's Visitor; and
- (v) other visits as directed by the court of protection or requested by the PGO.

In total, the PGO anticipates that these criteria will result in approximately 9,500 visits.

KPI 3: To maintain an effective system to collect and review accounts, and use this process to review the case management regime to ensure that it is meeting the needs of each customer and client.

Targets:

(a) To collect 60 per cent. of accounts, in all cases where an account is properly due, within two calendar months of the accounting end date; 85 per cent. within four calendar months of the accounting end date; and 95 per cent. within six calendar months of the accounting end date.

(b) To complete the review of, or to have requested further information for, 100 per cent. of accounts within 20 working days of receipt.

(c) To complete the review of 75 per cent. of furthered-on accounts (that is, those where further information is needed) within 30 working days of the request for additional information.

(d) No case will have two accounts outstanding unless the court of protection has directed otherwise.

KPI 4: To deliver an improved service to clients.

Targets:

Correspondence

(a) To respond to

- 60 per cent. of correspondence within 5 working days of receipt;
- 80 per cent. of correspondence within 10 working days of receipt; and
- 98 per cent. of correspondence within 15 working days of receipt.

Release of funds

(b) To work with receivers to ensure they have access to funds to support the client for a year at a time. Where requests for release of funds are made over and above this, PGO will give directions to the Court Funds Office (CFO), or dispatch directions to the receiver within five working days in 80 per cent. of cases and within 10 working days in 95 per cent. of cases; or explain why it cannot release funds.

Applications for Receivership

(c) Providing it has all the appropriate forms and information required in support of an application, PGO will list a case for hearing and notify the applicant within 10 working days in 95 per cent. of cases.

(d) The hearing date will be within 35 working days of the date the hearing was listed in 95 per cent. of cases.

(e) After the hearing, PGO will notify applicants of the outcome of the hearing and request any further information the court requires within five working days in 95 per cent. of cases.

(f) PGO will issue orders within 10 working days in 95 per cent. of cases where all information and documents have been received.

Closing cases

(g) Where a client dies and PGO has a complete application for final directions, PGO will prepare and dispatch directions to transfer assets to personal representatives within 15 working days in 80 per cent. of cases, within 20 working days in 98 per cent. of cases.

Enduring Powers of Attorney

(h) PGO will register and return 98 per cent. of correctly lodged EPAs, where there are no objections, within five working days of the end of the statutory waiting period.

Accuracy of Orders

(i) PGO will ensure that in at least 98 per cent. of cases, orders will not be returned because of errors.

Case Transfer to Short Order Regime

(j) In 85 per cent. of cases identified for consideration for a short order regime, the case will be referred to the court of protection within 15 working days for a decision to be made.

(k) Where the Court directs a transfer, initiating action will be effected within 10 days of the decision in 95 per cent. of cases.

KPI 5: To demonstrate improvements in efficiency in value for money terms by meeting a Unit Cost target for undertaking each case in each of the main business streams as follows:

Targets:

- Enduring Powers of Attorney—£114 per case; and
- Appointing and Supervising Receivers—£580 per case".

Her Majesty's Land Registry

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (The Baroness Ashton of Upholland) has made the following written ministerial statement.

"The following list sets out the key performance targets that have been set for Her Majesty's Land Registry for 2006–07.

Customer Service

Speed:

Percentage of official copy and search applications processed within two working days: 98 per cent.

Percentage of all registrations processed within 18 working days: 80 per cent.

Accuracy:

Percentage of registrations processed free of any error: 98.5 per cent.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Overall Satisfaction[1]:

Percentage of customers who, overall, are very satisfied/satisfied with the full range of services provided by land registry: Better than 95 per cent.

Financial:

Percentage return on average capital employed: 3.5 per cent.

Efficiency[2]:

Cost per unit in cash terms[3] *(real terms)*[4]: £29.77 *(£21.17)*

Critical Action Points

Customer Service: Introduce imagery-based access to land register online;

Land Registration: Add a further 700,000 hectares of land to the total areas of registered freehold land in England and Wales;

Electronic Service Delivery: Introduce a prototype chain matrix service to provide transparency to residential conveyancing chains;

Other Business Development: Establish a Land Registry Portal as a first step in implementing a single integrated customer interface for all online Land Registry information and services."

More information on these and other key targets is published in the Strategic and Business Plans.

[1] Result from quarterly satisfaction survey.

[2] This is a final year target towards the HM Treasury-agreed cost per unit target for 2006–07 of £29.94 in cash terms (£21.17 in real terms). Target adjusted for revised pension costs.

[3] Based on the GDP deflator issued by HM Treasury on 23rd December 2005 (base year 1992–93).

[4] The real term unit cost in the base year of 1992–93 was £30.65.

DEFENCE

Northern Ireland (Security Normalisation)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I have today placed in the Library of the House the structured plan for the phased reduction of troops to peacetime levels, assuming the continued maintenance of an enabling environment, which the Government agreed to produce as part of the programme for security normalisation in Northern Ireland announced last year.

Tranche 1 of the plan has been completed ahead of schedule, including the removal of the three hilltop observation posts, the dismantling of the military supersanger in Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Newtonhamilton and the removal of the military observation posts in Masonic Base and on Divis Tower. Forkhill has been vacated and closed, and the Army has withdrawn from the PSNI stations at Kinawley and Rosslea. The six month roulement Battalion known as Northern Ireland Battalion 1 (NIBAT 1) was withdrawn from Northern Ireland on 16 January. This marked the withdrawal of the last roulement Battalion deployed in Northern Ireland.

We shall be consulting with the trades unions on the implementation of this plan once the full impact of the normalisation programme on civilian staff has been established.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): My statement to the House on 2 December 2005 set out the process by which the Government proposed to amend the local government pension scheme in England and Wales, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise which began on 5 December 2005 and which ended on 28 February 2006. A summary of the responses received will be placed on the ODPM/LGPS website.

The local government pensions scheme is a guaranteed, final salary pension scheme open primarily to employees of local government but also to those who work in other organisations associated with local government, including, higher and further education institutions. It is also a funded scheme, with its pensions funds being managed and invested locally within the framework of regulations provided by Government. In deciding on the regulations needed to ensure that all members' pensions are safe, and prudently funded, the Government have to take account of the advice of actuaries, as well as the views of representatives of employers and members, and other interested parties.

My 2 December statement made clear the Government's intention to secure the scheme's continued affordability and viability, without placing an unfair burden on taxpayers. The Government remain committed to that objective, and also to providing an equality-proofed scheme which is flexible and attractive in its provisions to employees and employers, both now and in the future.

To fulfil the Government's objective for the scheme, considerable efforts have been made to reform and to plan its future, within the framework provided by the Tripartite Committee. The Government, with the cooperation of the local authority employers and trades unions, want to see the provision of good quality pensions for all local authority workers. The Tripartite Committee provides the right framework for key interests to seek agreement, through analysis and transparent discussions, on the way ahead for the scheme and for any new benefit structure. However, in regulating the scheme, the Government are required by the scheme's governing regulations to secure its on-going solvency and compliance with the law.

It is intended to place before Parliament the necessary amending regulations to implement what was outlined in my 2 December statement. These will introduce significant and well supported flexibilities into the scheme's legal framework to reflect the simplified tax regime provided by the Finance Act 2004. It is the Government's wish also to strike a fair and proportionate balance between the extent and the cost of any affordable and legal safeguards for existing scheme members. To ensure compliance with European Union age discrimination legislation, set out in Council directive 2000/78/EC, and to secure ongoing cost stability, the rule of 85 will be removed from the Scheme with effect from 1 October 2006. We remain firmly committed to ensuring the protection of those members born before 31 March 1953 who would have satisfied the rule by their 60th birthday.

Such an approach, within the current scheme's framework, is seen as being both affordable and legal, and it maintains the consistent stance taken by the Government that no additional costs associated with these regulations should fall on taxpayers.

Looking ahead, the Government are committed to reforming the scheme to ensure it meets the challenge of a changing workforce both within and around local government in England and Wales. Discussions with scheme interests are proceeding to support the preparation of a policy discussion paper on a new-look scheme for consultation later in the year. Any reforms of the scheme must recognise, of course, that it already has a normal retirement age of 65, that it is funded and financed in a specific way and, crucially, that any new arrangements must continue to be both affordable and legal.

A key element of these discussions, which have already begun within the framework provided by the Tripartite Committee, will be to address positively the concerns expressed about the position of existing scheme members who contrast their particular circumstances with the agreement reached in October 2005 by other, but unfunded, public service pension schemes. The Government intend that these reforms can be guided by the principle that up to half of the savings achieved by the final removal of the rule of 85 can be recycled into the development of whatever benefit package is felt by the stakeholders and membership to be appropriate for the new-look 2008 scheme.

Going forward, the Government, given their regulatory responsibilities for the solvency and viability of the scheme, remain firmly committed to the provision of affordable and sustainable, good quality pension arrangements in the local government pension scheme, as indeed it believes so too are all the interested parties connected with its present and future.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Climate Change—The UK Programme 2006

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I am pleased to announce that the Government and the devolved Administrations have today published the "UK Climate Change Programme 2006", to update the programme that we introduced in 2000.

The UK has one of the best records of any country in tackling greenhouse gas emissions, and we have already met our Kyoto target for 2010. The programme sets out the Government's commitments at international and domestic levels to meet the challenge of climate change. It also sets out our approach to strengthening the role that individuals can play. Progress in all three areas is regarded by the Government as essential.

Our review over the past eighteen months has evaluated how effective our existing policies have been, and analysed a range of possible new policies to contribute towards our national climate change goals. We are introducing a range of policies to strengthen our domestic delivery. Among these are measures to support increased generation from renewable sources, encourage the installation of energy efficiency measures in households, provide more reliable consumer product information, support more sustainable transport choices, introduce higher standards for efficiency in buildings and finance energy efficiency measures for public sector organisations.

Today we are also consulting on the draft of the "UK's National Allocation Plan" for the second phase of the EU emissions trading scheme. The scheme is a central element of the energy supply and business sectors' contribution to our policies to tackle climate change. It will be used to make a significant contribution to our national emissions reduction target.

These policies are expected to reduce the UK's emissions of the basket of greenhouse gases to 23–25 per cent. below base year levels, around twice our commitment to reduce emissions under the Kyoto Protocol. It is also expected to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions to 15–18 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010. The review, and policies introduced already, could reduce carbon emissions by 7–12MtC by 2010. This would take the Government close to their domestic target of a 20 per cent. reduction by 2010. The Government still believe that the UK can achieve this target. This is an on-going process and the Government will in future report annually to Parliament on emissions, future plans and progress on the domestic climate change agenda. We believe we can reach the 20 per cent. target with support from all sections of the economy and society, not least by the collective action of individuals.

At international level, we will maintain our leadership role, and build on progress achieved through the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, the European Union and the Montreal Climate Change Conference. Our aim is to secure agreement to the action and long-term goal needed to establish an effective future international regime to tackle climate change. As part of this, in partnership with the European Union, we will enhance our efforts to help India, China and other developing countries evolve as low carbon economies.

Copies of this document will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament and of Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly Government, and Northern Ireland Assembly. Copies can also be found at DEFRA's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/pubs/ukccp/index.htm and the TSO offices.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's International Priorities

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I am today laying before Parliament Government White Paper Command 6762, "Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: the UK's International Priorities".

In a world of global communications and markets, our security and prosperity depend more than ever on what happens in other parts of the world. "Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's International Priorities" updates the FCO's 2003 White Paper, "UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO". It identifies the trends we expect to shape the world in the next 10 years, sets out the UK's role in the international system, and identifies the strategic international priorities for the Government as a whole.

The world in the next 10 years

Based on extensive consultation with partners around Government and beyond, some of the trends and their implications for the UK outlined in the White Paper are:

The gathering pace of globalisation. The flow of people, goods, money and knowledge, and the rapid growth of Asia, present new opportunities and risks. We will need to adapt our economy, and work with others to support global economic openness. And we must also help build effective states able to provide security, opportunity, justice and basic services for their citizens.

Pressures on natural resources. Economic demand, population growth and climate change are putting the world's natural resources under new pressure. We will need to manage increasing competition for energy in particular.

An uncertain security environment. Terrorism will remain the primary security threat to the UK. The fight to control the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons will be crucial over the next ten years. There will be new risks to fragile states and uncertainty about developments in key parts of the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

The UK Government's response

To meet these and other challenges, the British Government:

Must be engaged around the globe to shape developments at a time of rapid change.

Must strengthen its partnerships and international institutions to build a future based on common values and interests.

Must secure closer co-operation across Government and with others as the impact at home of events overseas continues to grow.

The UK's International Priorities

The 2003 White Paper introduced a set of strategic priorities to guide the Government's international policy. This new White Paper builds on these strategic priorities, and introduces some new ones.

The provision of public services to UK citizens abroad has always been a core activity. The continuing importance of delivering high quality consular support, against a backdrop of increasing demand, has led to our decision to introduce a new strategic priority to cover this activity.

We have also introduced a new strategic priority on managing migration and combating illegal immigration. The pressures driving migration are significant. Managing our economic, social, security and development objectives will be an important task for Government in the years ahead.

On the basis of this assessment, the strategic international priorities for Government identified in the White Paper are:

1. Making the world safer from global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

2. Reducing the harm to the UK from international crime, including drug trafficking, people smuggling and money laundering.

3. Preventing and resolving conflict through a strong international system.

4. Building an effective and globally competitive EU in a secure neighbourhood.

5. Supporting the UK economy and business through an open and expanding global economy, science and innovation and secure energy supplies.

6. Promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction underpinned by human rights, democracy, good governance and protection of the environment.

7. Managing migration and combating illegal immigration.

8. Delivering high-quality support for British nationals abroad, in normal times and in crises.

9. Ensuring the security and good governance of the UK's Overseas Territories.

The role of the FCO

The White Paper also sets out how the FCO will continue to adapt to take forward the strategic priorities, working with others in Government. The role of the FCO is to exercise judgment and influence in order to shape the future for the benefit of our citizens and others. We must be engaged on the ground with the knowledge, experience and skills to effect change.

Our network of posts must continue to adapt to new opportunities and risks. We are moving resources to priorities in Asia and the Middle East; tackling issues such as conflict, energy security and economic and political reform in key regions; developing rapid deployment teams for crisis response; and using information and communications technology to help us work more flexibly and effectively.

This White Paper and the strategic priorities will provide the framework for deploying our efforts as resources remain tight and demand for our services grows.

HEALTH

Patient Power Review Group

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): The Department has set up a review group to consider the concerns that were set out in the case closure report from Ofcom, following its investigation into the price of telephone calls to hospital patients.

The group will be chaired by Ms. Melanie Kay of the Department of Health. Its membership will include the providers of bedside communications and entertainment services, patient representation, and National Health Service trusts. The group will report later this year.

The terms of reference for the group are as follows:

Purpose

The patient power review group will be responsible for reviewing existing contracts with the NHS and service providers to identify ways of addressing the concerns expressed in the recent Ofcom investigation. In summary, these were to ensure that patients and the NHS get best value from the contracts while the service providers are not disadvantaged in the market place. The intention is to produce an agreed framework that would enable NHS trusts and the providers of the service to modify their existing agreements.

Terms of Reference

1. Review all aspects of the charging structure:

Level of inbound call charges,

Requirement to cap outbound call charges at the standard national call rate, The availability of some free television and radio, and free TV for children,

Whether the cross subsidisation across the various services is appropriate or desirable,

Whether it is appropriate for a recorded message to be played in its entirety at the outset of each and every call.

2. Review the requirement to install, with limited clinical exceptions, units at every bedside within a hospital site, irrespective of use. Could this be altered in respect of all new installations and the repair and renewal ofunits already installed?

3. Review the requirement to offer services through a combined unit, offering television and telephone and capable of offering added value services. It should consider not only the extent to which NHS trusts have made use of the added functionality (or could make use in the future) but should consider what the appropriate minimum standards should be for all future installations and renewals.

4. Review and clarify the guidance issued by the Department in respect of NHS trusts exercising their own discretion in determining the local policy on the use of mobile phones in hospitals.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Vulnerable Women (Criminal Justice System)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): On 17 November 2005 I made a statement about developments at Styal prison following the tragic series of deaths of six women there and further work planned relating to women offenders. I outlined in that statement a great deal of work that is underway in respect of women who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System, in particular, changes made at Styal and other women's prisons and the Women's Offending Reduction Programme (WORP), which is co-ordinating and implementing a comprehensive programme of work to address the complex range of factors that affect women's offending.

I said that it was timely to take stock of the work being done and to look again at the measures in place to ensure that we are doing everything possible for the especially vulnerable group of women who come into contact with the criminal justice system. I undertook to make a further announcement when the scope of this review had been determined and I am now able to make that further announcement.

I am pleased to announce that Baroness Jean Corston has agreed to undertake this review. Jean recently chaired the Joint Committee on Human Rights and instigated its valuable and comprehensive Inquiry into Deaths in Custody in 2003.

The review will be focused on those women in whom a multitude of risk factors coexist and which could lead them to harm themselves in prison. This could, for example, encompass women with serious mental illness or serious drug addictions; women with other mental health problems such as personality disorder, which can be exacerbated by prison and increase their vulnerability; and those women who are persistent low-level offenders, living chaotic lives. It will look at provision for such women at each occasion they come into contact with the criminal justice system, for example, at police stations, at court, on remand, on sentencing, during sentence in the community, in prison and on release.

I stress that the review will complement rather than replicate the work underway and will seek to build on the vast amount of work and knowledge that already exist. For example, WORP aims to provide a more appropriate and joined-up response in the community to the particular factors that impact on women offenders. The Together Women Programme will trial an integrated approach to routing women to appropriate services to meet their needs at various stages of their offending history. Baroness Corston's review will seek to build on this work, focusing on identified gaps in provision.

Part of the review will profile the characteristics and histories of some of the women who have died in custody in recent years (particularly those at Styal) and look at the pathway through the criminal justice system that led them to that point. It is hoped that some of those families sadly bereaved by these deaths might be willing to share their experiences with the review and provide an insight into the events that led to custody. This element of the review could provide a strong contribution to learning lessons and may be of some small comfort to those bereaved families.

The review will be assisted by a small advisory reference group, with some wider groups and themed seminars. Baroness Corston is establishing her advisory group, which is likely to include, for example, Prison Reform Trust, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Women in Prison, INQUEST and NIMHE. Senior officials from the Home Office Women's Offending Reduction Programme, the Prison Service Women's group and the National Offender Management Service Safer Custody Group will also sit on the reference group. A wider group of people and organisations, whose expertise will be vital to the review, will also be invited to contribute both directly and through meetings and seminars. Many other individuals and organisations with specialist knowledge are being identified and will also be invited to contribute to the review.

My right hon. Friend Baroness Scotland has asked Baroness Corston for a progress report by the end of June 2006 and for her final report to reach us by 31 December 2006. The final report will be published.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Microgeneration Strategy

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): On the 28 March 2006, I am publishing the Government's "Microgeneration Strategy". Publication fulfils the requirement under the Energy Act 2004 to publish a strategy for the promotion of microgeneration within 18 months of commencement of the relevant section.

Microgeneration is generally defined as the small-scale production of heat and/or electricity from a low carbon source. The suite of technologies caught by this definition includes solar (PV to provide electricity and thermal to provide hot water), micro-wind (including the new rooftop mounted turbines), micro-hydro, heat pumps, biomass, micro combined heat and power and small-scale fuel cells.

A study commissioned by the DTI from the Energy Saving Trust (EST) suggested that by 2050, microgeneration could provide 30–40 per cent. of the UK's electricity needs and help to reduce household carbon emissions by 15 per cent. per annum. In 2004 there were approximately 82,000 microgeneration installations in the UK.

The objective of the microgeneration strategy is to create conditions under which microgeneration becomes a realistic alternative or supplementary energy generation source for the householder, for the community and for small businesses. If this can be achieved we will start to see the level of growth in installations required for microgeneration to make the significant contribution to our energy goals that is its potential.

The strategy contains a wide range of actions, varying from the £80 million low carbon buildings capital grant programme, improvements to existing communications activity, a review of the permitted development regime to a pilot to assess the benefits of smart metering combined with microgeneration.

TRANSPORT

Greater London Authority Transport Grant

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): The Greater London Authority Transport Grant for 2006–07 has today been determined by the Secretary of State for Transport at £2,389 million, following consultation with the Mayor of London. This is a block grant provided by the Government to Transport for London to support and improve transport services in London, including London Underground. This grant determination is based on the Government's five-year settlement for TfL which was announced in July 2004, and includes the residual £6 million which is the Department's remaining share of the original £154 million development budget for Crossrail.

The Greater London Authority Transport Grant for 2005–06 has also been re-determined by the Secretary of State for Transport at £2,180.468 million. This re-determination increases the Government's grant this year to TfL by £19.453 million, and primarily reflects my Department's contribution to Crossrail costs in 2005–06, additional funding for TfL's Urban Bus Challenge projects in 2005–06, and the residual balance of the SRA's budget for the East London Line extension from 2004–05.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Reports

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection reports on the following councils were published today: Ceredigion county council, Clackmannanshire council, Durham City council, Havant borough council, the Highland council (two separate reports), Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead council, Thurrock borough council, West Devon borough council and Weymouth and Portland borough council. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The BFI reports detail a range of strengths and weaknesses in the housing benefit services provided by councils and make recommendations to improve the security and efficiency of benefit delivery.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the reports and may ask the councils for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 29 March 2006

TREASURY

Finance Bill

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): It is expected that the Finance Bill will be published on Friday 7 April. Explanatory Notes on the Bill's clauses will be available in the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office and in the Libraries of both Houses on that day. Members of the public will be able to obtain copies of the explanatory notes from the Treasury. These will also be available on the Treasury's website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

CABINET OFFICE

Transformational Government (Implementation Plan)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): Following the publication in November 2005 of "Transformational Government—enabled by technology" (Cm 6683) I am today giving notice of the publication of an implementation plan for that strategy.

Transformational Government set out a vision for 21st century Government, enabled by technology. The implementation plan sets out how the centre of government and public service delivery organisations acting collectively can create a whole greater than the sum of parts. The plan tackles obstacles to success, focuses on the customer, joins up work across Government, tackles duplication and empowers the technology workforce. It is part of a long term programme of change as set out in the transformational Government strategy, also referred to in the Budget.

Copies are available in the Libraries of the House and on the Chief Information Officers Council website at: www.cio.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Local Authority Fees and Charges Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): Charges to cover the costs of local enforcing authorities in regulating processes which are subject to Part I of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Local Air Pollution Control (LAPC)) were introduced in April 1991. Interim charges for installations which are subject to the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 (Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC) and Local Authority—Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (LA-IPPC)) were introduced in August 2000.

With the approval of the Treasury to the extent required, and following consultation with local authority associations and industry, I have made revised schemes in respect of the Environmental Protection Act and in respect of the Pollution Prevention and Control Act. The schemes specify the scale of fees and charges to take effect from 1 April 2006.

There will be a 2.5 per cent. increase to all LAPC, LAPPC and LA-IPPC fees and charges for 2006–07. For the first time a risk based charging system will be introduced this year in line with the existing risk based methodology which was first published in 2003 for LAPC and LAPPC and in 2005 for LA-IPPC. The basis of these increases and the risk based scheme is set out in the regulatory impact assessment which is available on the Defra website at the following website address:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lapc/charges/default.htmt#lapc.

Some minor amendments to the schemes have also been made in the light of consultation with local authorities and industry.

Copies of the schemes have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Westminster Foundation for Democracy

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): On 4 April 2005, the then Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with responsibility for human rights, my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Bill Rammell), announced to the House the beginning of a consultation exercise on the future of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). The consultation exercise followed a review of the WFD by River Path Associates, commissioned jointly by the FCO and WFD, and conducted in accordance with Government guidelines on reviewing non-Departmental public bodies.

Many hon. Members from all sides of the House, through their own commitment to work with and on behalf of the WFD, were already aware of the contribution that the foundation has made since 1992 to promoting democracy and human rights—essential themes in promoting the UK's national interest in a safe, just and prosperous world. I am pleased to report that the overwhelming majority of responses received during the consultation, both from hon. Members of this House and specialists in democracy promotion in the UK and from overseas, confirmed our view that the WFD continues to fulfil a uniquely valuable role in promoting democracy through party-to-party links and through its non-political work in supporting institutional and parliamentary capacity building. The arms-length approach brings value-added benefit that could not be achieved by Government.

In light of these responses and our own analysis, I am pleased to announce that the Government have concluded that it should continue to support the WFD through a grant in aid by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and to retain its current structures unchanged.

At the same time, in light of some of the review's observations, the Government and WFD agreed last year to make some changes to the foundation's operating methods to enhance accountability and transparency. This has resulted in the introduction of stronger mechanisms for appraising, monitoring and evaluating projects, reflected in new, annual contractual arrangements between the foundation and the UK political parties.

The conclusion of agreement on these new measures brings to an end the process initiated by the review. Throughout this period, we have appreciated the constructive and co-operative approach of all the members of the board and staff of the WFD, under the chairmanship first of my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mike Gapes) and now of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of York (Hugh Bayley). The Government welcome the conclusion of the review and look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the WFD in our joint endeavour to promote democracy around the world.

HEALTH

Contingencies Fund

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The approval of the Department's Spring Supplementary Estimate via the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No 2) Bill will not occur until the end of the month. Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,785,769,000 for services has been sought in the Supplementary Estimate for the Department of Health. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £1,700,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): Today I am publishing a report on the review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act public consultation. The consultation ran from 16 August to 25 November 2005. A total of 535 responses were received from a wide range of stakeholders and individuals. The report was produced for the Department of Health by People, Science and Policy Ltd. and comprises an independent summary of the arguments raised. Copies of the report, and the consultation responses have been placed in the Library.

In addition, over the same time period as the public consultation, the Department of Health funded the Progress Educational Trust to host an online discussion forum with the aim of facilitating open public discussion on issues raised in the context of the review. A summary of the postings made has been produced and copies have been placed in the Library.

Strategic Health Authorities, Ambulance Trusts and Primary Care Trusts (Reconfiguration)

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In my written ministerial statements dated 1 December 2005 and 14 December 2005, I explained that I had agreed that proposals for the reconfiguration of strategic health authorities (SHAs), the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs) and the reconfiguration of NHS ambulance trusts were fit to go forward for consultation in the cause of improving services to patients. The objective has been to ensure that the consultation on PCTs covers the broadest and most appropriate range of options. This statement provides an update on progress.

The proposals for the reconfiguration of SHAs and PCTs have been subject to a 14-week local consultation, which ended on 22 March 2006. Similarly, the proposals for the reconfiguration of NHS ambulance trusts have been subject to a 14-week consultation, which ended on 22 March, led by SHAs on my behalf.

No decisions will be taken regarding the reconfiguration of SHAs, PCTs and NHS ambulance trusts before the results of the consultations have been considered and any recommendations reviewed. SHAs will submit reports on the consultations on SHA and NHS ambulance trust reconfiguration proposals to the Department of Health by 5 April 2006 and on PCT reconfiguration proposals to the Department by 10 April.

In previous statements, I explained that an external panel had been established to advise Ministers on whether SHAs had adequately engaged local stakeholders as part of the consultations on SHA and PCT reconfiguration proposals and whether any recommendations for reconfiguration submitted by SHAs meet the criteria set out in Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS, published on 28 July 2005.

I will announce decisions as soon as possible, which may be on different timetables for the different forms and levels of organisations. Our aim is for new SHAs and new NHS ambulance trusts to be established from 1 July 2006 and for new PCTs to be established from 1 October 2006.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Forensic Science Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): During the debate on the Forensic Science Service Trading Fund (Revocation) Order 2005, which took place on Wednesday 14 December, I undertook to clarify the criteria we intend to apply when considering whether the Forensic Science Service (FSS) should continue as a 100 per cent. Government-owned company (GovCo), or whether there would be advantages in changing the status of the organisation to a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

The context of this statement is the policy decision following the McFarland Review (2003) to promote greater competition in the forensic science market and to convert the FSS into a fully commercial business, allowing it to compete effectively in an increasingly dynamic forensic science market. The McFarland Review originally recommended that the FSS become a GovCo for an interim period (12–18 months) before a change of status to PPP. Whilst accepting that a move to a more commercial status was the right approach for FSS, I, and my predecessor in this post, my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Caroline Flint), have been clear that there is no inevitability about a move to a PPP. It remains the Government's position that FSS Ltd must be allowed to establish its viability as a GovCo. We shall only agree to a further change of status to PPP if there are convincing reasons to do so.

The decision as to whether to change status is complicated by the fact that the Home Office is responsible for how forensics benefit the UK criminal justice system overall and is also owner of the leading provider of UK forensic science services. There are, thus, a wide range of sometimes conflicting criteria, which need to be considered and balanced. Moreover, not all criteria will be able to be judged clearly at any one time. Any decision, therefore, needs to be taken in the round. In general, there are four sets of criteria: the needs of the UK Criminal Justice System; the state of the UK forensic science services market; the needs of the FSS; and the requirements of Home Office as shareholder.

The needs of the UK Criminal Justice System

This is the most important set of criteria. Any proposed change in status for the FSS needs to demonstrate that it would deliver clear benefits to the UK Criminal Justice System. Whilst there are many factors which could be taken into account, the Home Office believes that (i) quality and reliability, (ii) service levels, (for example in satisfying customer turnaround time requirements) (iii) value-for-money and (iv) level of innovation, are the key criteria.

The Home Office will consult the principal UK Criminal Justice System forensic science service stakeholders (principally, the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service) to seek their views as to whether a change of status would be beneficial to the overall UK Criminal Justice System.

The state of the UK forensic science services marketplace

In keeping with the recommendations of McFarland, Home Office will need to be assured that a fully competitive marketplace is likely to develop, whatever the merits of GovCo and PPP status in other regards. This assessment will need to take account both of the demonstrated state of the marketplace at that time and the likely future development.

The key criteria to be assessed are: (i) evidence of real competitive behaviour in the UK forensic science services marketplace (e.g. price movements for forensic services; movement of market share on competitive tenders; new entrants to the marketplace; (ii) a level "playing field" for all forensic science service suppliers; (iii) development of appropriate procurement practices within the police authorities (e.g. contractualisation); and (iv) a regulatory framework which is clear and fit-for-purpose.

The needs of the Forensic Science Service

The FSS has many exciting plans for enhancing its services to its UK Criminal Justice System and other customers. These include continuing research to develop the next generation of forensic techniques, upgrading its accommodation to modern, state-of-the-art facilities, being more flexible in its delivery of services to customers, and broadening the base of its science-related businesses. Delivery of this vision will require substantial investment, both in physical and human capital, development of new and existing capabilities and exercising strong implementation skills.

In coming to a decision on status change, the Home Office will consult the FSS Board as to the respective merits of GovCo and PPP status in implementing the company's strategy and agreed business plan. Key criteria in this regard are: (i) access to finance; (ii) access to capability; and (iii) freedoms required to implement the agreed Business Plan.

The needs of Home Office as Shareholder

As a Government-owned business, the FSS has to compete with other calls on public funds and consequently Home Office's investment in it needs to demonstrate an appropriate risk/return profile.

In coming to a decision on the relative merits of GovCo vs PPP, the Home Office will need to consider: (i) assessment of the financial value of the FSS; (ii) the financial risks to Home Office associated with ownership of the FSS; and (iii) Home Office's funding priorities.

Summary

As outlined above, no decision has been made as to whether FSS should remain a GovCo or change status to PPP. The Home Office's principal requirement in coming to a decision is whether a change of status represents the best long-term outcome for the UK Criminal Justice system forensic science marketplace and its stakeholders, bearing in mind the needs of the FSS and Home Office's requirements as a shareholder.

In the debate I set out my intention not to make a firm decision until summer 2007, with the proviso that, if the FSS Board, or Home Office exercising its shareholder responsibilities, outlined a pressing need for an earlier decision, I reserved the ability to consider this request and share it with Parliament.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Disaster Risk Reduction Policy

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): The Department for International Development (DFID) will launch its disaster risk reduction policy on 30 March 2006. This policy provides a framework for DFID to integrate disaster risk reduction measures more effectively into its own work, as well as strengthening the international system's capacity to manage disaster risks, thus helping to reduce the threat that disasters pose to sustainable development and the millennium development goals (MDGs).

DFID made a public commitment to reducing disaster risk in its 1997 White Paper "Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century" and has a good track record of providing prompt and appropriate humanitarian assistance in developing countries. DFID has also supported a number of international organisations in tackling disaster risk reduction, including UN agencies and the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. However, in the wake of a series of large-scale disasters, including the 2004 Asian Tsunami, the 2005 Niger humanitarian crisis and the Pakistan earthquake, it is clear that both DFID and the international community must do more.

In my speech on humanitarian reform in December 2004, I committed DFID to giving a higher priority to disaster risk reduction. DFID's new disaster risk reduction policy sets out how this commitment will be put into practice. The goal of the policy is to contribute to sustainable development by reducing the burden of disasters on the poor and most vulnerable. This is in line with DFID's efforts to meet the millennium development goals, all of which are affected by the impact of disasters. The policy will also support the international commitments agreed at the 2005 World Conference on "Disaster Reduction in Kobe", as articulated in the Hyogo Framework for Action. DFID's policy has three objectives. First, it aims to promote the more effective integration of disaster risk reduction into development and humanitarian policy and planning. This includes working with the governments of developing countries and the World Bank to consider how disaster risk reduction can be incorporated more effectively into national-level planning, including through integrating disaster risk reduction into a country's nationally-owned Poverty Reduction Strategy. DFID will also ensure that disaster risk concerns are incorporated into our own planning in disaster-prone countries.

Secondly, DFID will aim to strengthen institutions, at both national and regional level, aimed at reducing risk in developing countries. DFID will work to ensure that governments have the right systems in place to manage disaster risk reduction. At the international level, DFID will work with other donors, the EU and UN to improve the international system and ensure that international commitments are put into action. DFID will work with the international financial institutions and other donors to increase the quantity of financing for disaster risk reduction and will increase our own funding, through the international system and bilaterally.

Thirdly, DFID will help to reduce the vulnerability of the poor by building their resilience to disaster risk. This will include support to the community-level disaster reduction work of civil society organisations, such as the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and non-governmental organisations, as well as supporting a better understanding of the private sector's role in risk reduction.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

Robert Hamill Inquiry

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): The Chairman of the Robert Hamill Inquiry, Sir Edwin Jowitt wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Office on the 9 December to request formally that I convert the statutory basis of the Robert Hamill Inquiry to the Inquiries Act 2005, under section 15 of that Act.

I have very carefully considered the representations made by Sir Edwin Jowitt and the other representations I have received, and have sought to take all the relevant factors into account. My concern throughout has been to ensure that the Robert Hamill Inquiry should be able to carry out its work both as fully and as effectively as possible. In light of this, and taking into account the case made for conversion by Sir Edwin Jowitt and all the representations I have received, I have decided to grant the request of the Robert Hamill Inquiry to be converted to the Inquiries Act 2005.

Through this statement I am formally giving notice under section 15 of the Inquiries Act to Sir Edwin Jowitt and the panel members that the Robert Hamill Inquiry will become an inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005. The date of conversion will be the date of this statement, 29 March 2006, and from this date the Robert Hamill Inquiry will be held under the Inquiries Act 2005. Sir Edwin Jowitt will remain the Chair of this Inquiry and there will be no change to its terms of reference as announced on 16 November 2004.

It remains the strong wish of both the Government and the Hamill Inquiry that the full facts in relation to the death of Robert Hamill should be established and I am confident that the Inquiries Act will provide an effective framework for achieving this. I can assure the House that the Government will continue to co-operate fully with this independent Inquiry.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Convicting Rapists and Protecting Victims

The Solicitor-General (Mr. Mike O'Brien): Today the Government are issuing a consultation paper—"Convicting Rapists and Protecting Victims—Justice for Victims of Rape", following a review of the law concerning rape.

This paper sets out a range of proposals which aim to improve the outcome of rape cases through further strengthening the existing legal framework and improving our care for victims and witnesses.

We want to ensure that stronger cases are presented to the courts, witnesses are given greater assistance in providing their evidence and courts hear evidence from experts that will better inform juries about the realities of rape and the psychological impact of sexual offences upon victims. Such evidence will address myths and stereotypes concerning how a victim might be expected to behave.

We believe these proposals have the potential to make a positive difference and welcome views on them. Copies of the consultation paper will be available in the Libraries of both Houses and can be downloaded from www.homeoffice.gov.uk and www.cjsonline.org.

TRANSPORT

Bathside Bay Container Terminal

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): My Department is announcing today that it is approving a proposal for ports development in the south-east—following a public inquiry in 2004—for the new Bathside Bay Container Terminal at Harwich. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is today issuing a parallel letter in respect of the planning applications which, together with the consents I have been asked to give, would allow the development to proceed. We believe that this scheme will provide much needed container capacity in the coming years.

Ports play a vital role in supporting the national economy. The Government are committed to maintaining and enhancing that role through our broad approach to ports policy and to the decisions we take on individual ports applications.

We are committed to sustainable distribution and this new project would play a large part in securing that aim. We understand at the same time that the new terminal will have a significant impact on the environment. This is why we have imposed controls on the development to provide new road and rail infrastructure so that congestion does not increase, to provide compensatory habitats for wildlife displaced by the scheme, and to reduce other environmental impacts such as noise, pollution and the visual impact.

On and Off-Road Motor Events

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I have today published a consultation paper which seeks views on proposed changes to the regulations governing on-road and off-road motor events, the Motor Vehicles (Competitions and Trials) Regulations 1969 (as amended) and the Motor Vehicles (Off Road Events) Regulations 1995.

We propose making a single new set of regulations, which would replace the existing 1969 on-road and 1995 off-road regulations and their subsequent amendments. Most provisions of the existing regulations would not be changed, including the conditions that apply to the authorisation and conduct of events. However, we are proposing to make some changes to the procedures for authorising events. The proposed changes will be in respect of England only. Existing regulations would continue to apply in Wales and Scotland until the devolved administrations—make their own new regulations. Northern Ireland already has separate legislation for on-road and off-road motor events, which are the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland.

It is also proposed the fees charged to authorise on road events should be raised to reflect current administration costs of providing the authorisation service. The fees were last changed in 1993 by the Motor Vehicles (Competition and Trials) (Amendment) regulations 1993 (S.I. 1993/2233).

The details of these proposals are mentioned in the consultation paper. A partial regulatory impact assessment with costs and benefits is attached to the consultation paper.

Copies of the consultation paper and the annexes have been placed in the House Libraries.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 30 March 2006

CABINET OFFICE

National School of Government

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): As part of a review being conducted by Sir Gus O'Donnell, the Cabinet Secretary, into the role and functions of the Cabinet Office, I can announce our intention to establish the National School of Government as a separate non-ministerial Department. This change of status will support the National School of Government's strategy to become a more customer-led organisation that is providing a shared service across the civil service and the wider public sector. Further details will be published in a framework document later this year.

Correspondence

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): I am today publishing a report on Departments' and Agencies' performanceon handling Members' and Peers' correspondence for 2005. Details are set out in the attached table. Departmental figures are based on substantive replies unless otherwise indicated.

The footnotes to the table provide general background information on how the figures have been compiled.

Correspondence from MPs / Peers to Ministers and Agency Chief Executives[1]

	2004			2005		
	Target set for reply (working days)	*Number of letters received*	*Percentage of replies within target*	*Target set for reply (working days)*	*Number of letters received*	*% of replies within target*
Department or Agency						
Cabinet Office	15	637	88	15	537	97
Department for Constitutional Affairs	20	3,416	64	20	3,179	92
Court Service	15	429	95	15	359	99
HM Land Registry	20	44	95	15	55	96
National Archives	15	149	100	10	30	100
Northern Ireland Court Service[2]	15	14	92	–	–	–
Official Solicitor and Public Trustee	15	17	100	15	26	100
Public Guardianship Office	15	134	93	15	112	99
Crown Prosecution Service	15	520	98	15	476	98
HM Customs and Excise[3]	18	1,321	51	–	–	–
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	18	4,817	78	20	5,085	63
Ministry of Defence[4]	15	5,989	62	15	5,378	79
Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency	15	126	99	15	207	99
Defence Estates[2]	15	11	100	–	–	–
Veterans Agency	15	287	99	15	138	99
Warship Support Agency[2]	15	15	91	–	–	–
Department for Education and Skills	15	15,313	93	15	18,547	86
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	15	14,305	81	15	12,051	75
Food Standards Agency	20	782*	59	20	738*	73
	20	78**	95	20	91**	90
** Letters where Health Ministers have replied.* *** Letters where Chief Executive/Chairman has replied.*						
Foreign and Commonwealth Office[5]	20	26,942	83	20	9,588	80
UK Visas[6]	15	12,849	45	15	9,189*	45
				20	1,720**	58
**Letters where UK Visa officials have replied.* ***Letters where FCO Ministers have replied.*						
Department of Health	20	20,140	80	20	20,155	91
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	10	284	81	10	340	92
NHS Estates[7]	20	112	73	20	90	86
NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency	20	57	60	20	32	86
Home Office (non IND correspondence)	15	9,445	76	15	8,899	79
Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)[8]	20	35,802	34	20	41,063	53
Criminal Records Bureau	10	272	95	10	471	94
HM Prison Service	20	1,154	73	20	868	80

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Correspondence from MPs / Peers to Ministers and Agency Chief Executives[1]

	2004			*2005*		
	Target set for reply (working days)	*Number of letters received*	*Percentage of replies within target*	*Target set for reply (working days)*	*Number of letters received*	*% of replies within target*
UK Passport Service	10	486	74	10	524	60
Department for International Development	15	4,686	80	15	4,593	67
Inland Revenue[3]	18	2,993	85	–	–	–
	18	1,601*	45	–	–	–
**Local tax office delegated figures (where local tax offices have replied direct to MPs)*						
Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Lord's Office	15	60	87	15	143	95
Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers	20	404	63	20	335	68
Northern Ireland Office	10	567	68	10	742	64
Compensation Agency	7	125	67	7	62	100
Northern Ireland Prison Service	10	48	85	10	39	92
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	15	10,135	81	15	8,937	79
Planning Inspectorate	8	379	81	10	243	67
Office of the Leader of the House of Commons	~~15~~	504	95	15	302	97
Scotland Office	15	82	77	15	56	53
Department for Trade and Industry[9]	15	11,807	72	15	10,821	50
Companies House	10	56	98	10	38	100
Employment Tribunals Service	10	61	93	10	91	95
Insolvency Service	10	33	94	10	99	98
Patent Office	10	297	84	10	496	94
Department for Transport	15	8,593	86	15	7,849	80
Driving Standards Agency	15	198	79	15	89	87
DVLA	7	1,276	100	7	1,113	100
Government Car and Despatch Agency	–	–	–	7	16	100
Highways Agency	15	285	95	15	287	99
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	10	20	100	10	18	100
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	15	13	77	15	16	94
HM Treasury[10]	15	4,316	86	15	2,585	84
HM Revenue and Customs[3]	–	–	–	18	4,231	72
				18	1,601*	45
National Savings and Investments	15	74	92	15	21	95
National Statistics	15	189	95	15	155	91
	10	133	73	10	114**	84
Valuation Office	18	18	83	18	21	80
**Local Tax Office 'Delegated' figures (where local tax offices have replied directly to MPs). The marked increase in correspondence in quarters 3 and 4 of 2004 continued throughout 2005 unabated. Clearances during the year were affected by moving some complaint drafters to help to clear Disputed Overpayments. Currently restructuring how we deal with complaints and performance should improve.* **Letters where National Statistician replied on Ministers' behalf						
Treasury Solicitor's Department	10	49	98	10	28	100
Wales Office	15	109	92	15	83	80
Department for Work and Pensions	20	13,319	86	20	10,596	90
Appeals Service	15	50	98	15	60	95
Child Support Agency	15	5,390	88	15	5,367	99
Debt Management	15	25	100	15	35	100
Disability and Carers Service	15	451	100	15	425	100
Health and Safety Executive	10	127	70	15	77	77
Jobcentre Plus	15	1,136	90	15	1,062	90
The Pension Service	15	1,340	89	15	1,042	98

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[1] Departments and Agencies which received 10 MPs/Peers letters or fewer during 2005 are not shown in this table. Holding or interim replies are not included unless otherwise indicated. This report includes letters from prospective candidates prior to the general election. The report does not include correspondence considered as Freedom of Information requests.

[2] Received fewer than 10 letters in 2005.

[3] With effect from 1 April 2005, HM Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue merged to form HM Revenue and Customs.

[4] Includes a small number of letters from members of the public that received a ministerial reply. Figure also includes some FOI requests, though these represent less than 1 per cent of total reported.

[5] Reduced volume of correspondence compared to previous years reflects the setting up of a central correspondence system and the introduction of a more accurate method of monitoring letters received.

[6] Poor performance caused by backlog of cases and resource issues. Performance for December 2005 was 75 per cent, increased to 81 per cent in March 2006.

[7] Abolished in September 2005.

[8] IND saw an increase in volume of 15 per cent between 2004 and 2005 (6 per cent increase in ministerial, and 21 per cent in official replies). During 2005 all official replies were again signed off by IND senior executive group members which inevitably built delays into the system, but had the effect of significantly enhancing the quality of replies.

[9] Performance slipped last year due to internal reorganisation following a reduction in staff numbers. Launch of new centralised response unit will raise level of performance.

[10] Includes all ministerial correspondence.

TREASURY

Inheritance Tax and Pensions Simplification

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): HM Revenue and Customs will be publishing tomorrow on their website draft Finance Bill provisions that clarify how inheritance tax rules will apply to members of registered pension schemes on and after 6 April 2006. A copy of the drafts will be available in the Library of the House.

Details of how this measure will apply were published on Budget day.

Valuation Office Agency

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): I have today set the following key performance indicators for the Valuation Office Agency for 2006–07:

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

To achieve overall customer satisfaction of 88 per cent.

Operations

Enable prompt issue of correct bills by local authorities through clearance of 90 per cent. of rating reports, and 95 per cent. of council tax reports within two months of receipt.

Enable prompt issue of tax assessments by clearing all HMRC initial appraisal cases for inheritance tax on average within 12 days.

Contain reductions in the 2005 rating lists to a maximum of 4.2 per cent. of the total compiled list rateable value, over the entire life of the lists.

Ensure that 96 per cent. of new council tax bandings are right first time.

Value For Money

To improve productivity by 5 per cent. in 2006–07 and be on course to achieve 15 per cent. improvement over the four years to 2007–08.

To improve value for money on inheritance tax work for HMRC by 5 per cent.

People

All staff to have the core skills and competencies for their role within six months of taking up post.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (Performance Targets 2006–07)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The key targets have been set for the Chief Executive of the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (AFPAA) for the financial year 2006–07. The Targets build upon progress made by the Agency since it formed on 1 April 1997 and reflect the importance of the delivery of Joint Personnel Administration whilst maintaining current outputs. They provide customers with an assurance that, as well as focusing on Joint Personnel Administration and critical services such as pay and pensions, AFPAA will continue to give high priority to the delivery of both current and historic medals.

To Deliver Pay

To make 99.9 per cent. of all pay payments by the due date (excluding late payments caused by events determined to be outside the control of the Agency).

To keep the monthly error rate of accuracy for the volume of payments within 0.5 per cent.

To Deliver Pension Services

To make 99 per cent. of all pension payments (including new awards) by the due date (excluding late payments caused by events determined to be outside the control of the Agency).

To keep the monthly error rate of accuracy for the volume of payments within 0.1 per cent.

To Support the Delivery of Joint Personnel Administration Programme

To achieve live service to the RN in accordance with target set by MOD (currently by end October 2006).

To achieve live service to the Army in accordance with target set by MOD (currently by end March 2007).

To deliver an effective Enquiry Centre Service

To deal with 75 per cent. of queries received by the Enquiry Centre on first contact.

To prepare for delivery of AFPAA services post 2009

To develop the AFPAA contribution to the project team, establish and meet 100 per cent. of milestones i.e. achieve Investment Approval (Initial Gate).

To meet approved efficiency targets for the delivery of core services

To deliver Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) efficiencies in line with the benefits identified in the approved business case for JPA.

To deliver an efficient and effective MOD Medal Office

To deliver current medals against applications within the timescales agreed with the Services and Ministers:

Current campaign medals within 35 working days

Conduct and Reserve medals within 45 working days

Historic medals (including Canal Zone) within 70 working days.

Project Falcon

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that a contract will be signed today with BAE Systems Insyte for the first increment of the Falcon Secure Trunk Communication System. Falcon will provide a modern, secure communications infrastructure for deployed formations and operating bases. As such it will help deliver the resilient information infrastructure that is key to providing our Armed Forces with the network enabled capability they need in the 21st Century. The contract is valued at over £200 million and the equipment will enter into service at the turn of the decade. This programme will also sustain more than 400 skilled jobs in the UK as well as helping British industry to remain at the forefront of military communications.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

FiReBuy Limited

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Jim Fitzpatrick): I am pleased to inform the House that today we will be establishing a new executive non-departmental public body in England—FiReBuy Limited.

In November 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service as part of the wider modernisation agenda. This gave effect to recommendations by the Audit Commission in their reports "In the Line of Fire" 1995 and "A Uniform Approach" 2000, as well as the 2002 report independent review of the FRS by Professor Sir George Bain, "The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives" and the 2003 White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service".

National procurement will contribute savings to the wider efficiency agenda, and savings made by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) will be retained locally for reinvestment in front-line services. FiReBuy Ltd. has been established as the national procurement body for the Fire and Rescue Service. In addition to being a non-departmental public body, FiReBuy Ltd. has been established as a company limited by guarantee.

FiReBuy Ltd. will enable savings to be made by negotiating better deals for buying in bulk and will eliminate the duplication of procurement of fire-specific equipment by individual FRAs. Rather than all 47 FRAs negotiating separately for service-specific items such as vehicles, protective clothing and respiratory equipment, FiReBuy Ltd. will negotiate contracts on their behalf and take the lead in subsequent contract monitoring and service level monitoring. It will be a Contracting Authority for the purposes of the EU procurement rules but ultimately it will remain the FRAs who acquire the assets and matching liabilities.

FiReBuy Ltd. will take the lead role in testing and acceptance activities for the lines of spend within its remit, thus avoiding the duplication of this work in each FRA.

A Chair, Mrs. Liz Barron, and a Board of five non-executive directors have been appointed after an open public competition held in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Three ex-officio Directors have been appointed to represent the Local Government Association, the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

Copies of the new organisation's management statement and financial statement, once approved by the FiReBuy board and the Deputy Prime Minister, will be placed in the House Libraries later in the spring.

Firelink

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Jim Fitzpatrick): Following a detailed evaluation of the bids from EADS Defence and Security Systems Ltd and O2 Airwave Ltd, I am announcing today that the Firelink contract has been let to O2 Airwave Ltd. This contracts ODPM to rolling-out the Firelink system in England and creates a framework for extending the system to Scotland and Wales, subject to decisions by Ministers in the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales.

Firelink brings fire and rescue service wide area radio communications into the 21st century with the levels of resilience and interoperability that these challenging times require, whilst ensuring the British taxpayer gets the best possible value for money.

Firelink will provide the service with a secure, highly resilient and flexible system supporting both voice and data communications and enable improved interoperability between fire and rescue services and other emergency services.

Planning Delivery Grant Finalisation

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): In December I announced the first provisional allocations for the 2006–07 round of planning delivery grant in England, the majority of which is a performance-related grant paid to local authorities in recognition of their work in planning. Today I am finalising these allocations and announcing the remaining final elements of the Grant to the House.

The Government's aim is to enhance the resourcing of the planning system in a way that drives performance improvement and ensures effective delivery of our objectives for sustainable communities. Planning delivery grant is specifically targeted towards meeting the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Public Service Agreements (PSA) 5 and 6. PSA 5 aims to achieve a better balance between housing availability and demand. PSA 6 requires all authorities to have local development frameworks in place (in accordance with agreed local development schemes) and to meet the best value development control targets by March 2007. Beyond this date the PSA requires local authorities to maintain this level of performance.

The Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) is not ring-fenced or hypothecated beyond the condition that 25 per cent. of the total received by authorities in the 2006–07 financial year must be used for capital expenditure. In that financial year, £135 million will support planning services through the PDG, in addition to other efforts at boosting the resources available to enhance good planning, such as the raising of planning fees in April 2005.

I can confirm today the amount of grant to be distributed to authorities in 2006–07 is just over £127 million. It will be paid to local planning authorities at a London borough, district and county level, national park authorities, regional planning bodies, the broads authority and the Greater London Authority. The remaining £7.975 million of the grant will be used to support a number of national initiatives and this is broken down as follows: The planning advisory service and the advisory team for large applications will both be allocated £2 million each for their work supporting local authority planning performance; £2 million will be allocated to the planning inspectorate for their work on local development plan preparation; £0.5 million will be used to support the implementation of planning for housing policies in "Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing", which will be published in the summer; £1.3 million to fund post-graduate planning bursaries to address issues caused by the shortage of qualified planners and £175,000 to develop a development control certificate. This is a qualification which would provide planning support staff with a university accredited qualification to equip them to deal with minor planning applications, hence raising development control capacity in LPAs.

The grant elements for local authorities being announced today are awarded on a number of different criteria. £20.8 million has been allocated across English local authorities based on their performance in making future plans for their local area. This grant allocation was dependent on local authorities delivering an annual monitoring report to Government Offices by December 31 2005 and all 396 local authorities met this target and will consequently receive £52,525 each.

This year has seen a huge improvement in local authorities' online planning services with 95 per cent. now achieving a ranking of good or excellent. This is well above the target in our PSA 6 delivery plan which states that "80 per cent. of local authorities are to have 'good or excellent' e-planning services in place by the end of March 2006". We are continuing to use planning delivery grant to incentivise and reward local authorities' achievements in this area. The "e-planning" allocations will range from £4,920 to £24,446 to all authorities ranked as good or excellent through satisfying a minimum of 15 out of 21 e-planning criteria, with the highest awards going to those who achieve all 21.

Local authorities are rewarded for both improvement towards and achievement of best value development control targets in the period 1 October 2004 to 30 June 2005. These allocations were announced as provisional in December 2005 and I am announcing finalised figures in this statement today. The proportion of grant allocated to local authorities within the high housing demand and growth areas as identified in the communities plan has been increased to further incentivise the step change in housing supply which the Barker review concluded was needed to make housing more affordable for the next generation, with £16 million being allocated in total. This money is allocated in proportion to the contribution of these authorities towards delivering net additions to the housing stock. Pathfinder authorities receive an allocation of £100,000 each in recognition of the low demand for housing in their areas. Local authorities are also awarded £1,743 for each enterprise area within their boundary.

Regional planning bodies receive grant to support their work preparing regional spatial strategies and in recognition of the additional work which the strengthened regional planning function involves. In 2006–07 this totals £6.835 million. The Greater London Authority (GLA) will receive £90,000 in recognition of its plan making responsibilities. The award is based on the GLA's performance against its business plan, and is given in recognition of work on: sub-regional development frameworks; completion of strategic planning guidance documents; the Housing Capacity Study; and the implementation of the London Plan.

This year, as in the previous two years, the grant will be subject to conditions to ensure that the Minister has the power to act appropriately to partly withhold payment or recover part or all of grant paid where there are concerns over the accuracy or proven inaccuracies in the information on which allocations were made. I may consider withholding up to 10 per cent. of the grant allocated to authorities whose best value Performance Indicator 109 (BVPI 109) has been qualified by the auditor until we have established to our satisfaction the reason for the qualification and the reliability of the data on which grant was allocated. Following this I may seek to recover some or all of the monies paid to those authorities.

As part of the allocation criteria for PDG, I have included a provision for abatement of the development control element of the grant. This relates to performance on appeals and was announced as part of the first announcement of provisional figures which I announced in December 2005. This states that where an authority's performance on appeal is at least 40 per cent. worse than the national average (32.65 per cent. of appeals upheld against the authority), 10 per cent. of their development control allocation will be abated.

Where this performance is at least 50 per cent. worse than the average, this abatement will increase to 20 per cent. of the development control allocation. This condition underlines the continuing importance we place on quality in decision making. Today's announcement confirms the abatements of the 19 authorities whose provisional allocations of the development control element of grant were abated in the first announcement of PDG 06/07 in December 2005, and the £697,358 that this generates will be recycled amongst all other authorities.

A table showing the amounts of planning delivery grant payable for the financial year 2006–07 is available in the libraries of the House. This sets out the details of each recipient's grant.

Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2006

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): My statement to the House of Commons on 28 March re-affirmed our commitment to secure the continued affordability and viability of the Local Government Pension Scheme and to provide secure, equality-proofed pensions for its existing and future membership.

A statutory instrument will be laid before Parliament today to remove the 85 year rule from the Scheme from 1 October 2006, in order to comply with Council Directive 2000/78/EC. The regulations will also provide protection for existing scheme members who will be 60 and satisfy the 85-year rule by 2013 and will introduce significant and well supported flexibilities into the scheme's legal framework to reflect the simplified tax regime provided by the Finance Act 2004.

In the light of discussions held yesterday with the trades unions and local government employers, we are calling on both sides to begin talks, to start now on a nothing ruled in nothing ruled out basis, to address the protection of existing scheme members, the recycling of savings, and the development of a more equitable scheme.

The Government stand prepared to introduce further amendments before the summer recess to update the regulations in light of any agreed proposals which emerge from the talks between the trades unions and local government employers.

The Government are committed to good quality pensions for local government workers without placing an unfair burden on taxpayers.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Waste

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): I am pleased to announce that, following consideration of the responses to public consultation, I have today laid before Parliament the Waste Management (England and Wales) regulations 2006 (S.I. 2006 No. 937), The Environment Act 1995 (Commencement No. 23) (England and Wales) Order 2006 (S.I. 2006 No. 934 (C. 27)) and a final regulatory impact assessment.

The effect of section 75(7)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 is to exclude waste from premises used for agriculture, and waste from mines and quarries, from the waste management controls that apply to "controlled waste". The main purpose of the regulations is to repeal that exclusion and to apply to agricultural waste, and to non-mineral waste from mines and quarries, the national controls that are already in place to comply with the Waste Framework Directive (75/442/EEC as amended) and the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC).

The exclusion in section 75(7) (c) of the 1990 Act has been the subject of infraction proceedings on the Waste Framework Directive. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued an adverse judgment on this infraction on 16 December 2004 (Case C-62/03) and a copy is available on the Court's website at http://curia.eu.int/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en&Submit=Submit&docj=docj&numaff=C-62%2F03&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100. The exclusion also applies to the legislation transposing the Landfill Directive in England and Wales.

At present, most agricultural waste is disposed of on farm in "farm dumps" or by open burning. The regulations will ensure that agricultural waste is recovered or disposed of in ways which protect the environment and human health. The controls will be enforced by the Environment Agency, as the "competent authority" in England and Wales, in ways which are proportionate to the risk to the environment and human health. The existing controls have applied to all other sectors of industry and types of waste since May 1994 in the case of the Waste Framework Directive; and since June 2002 in the case of the Landfill Directive.

The main consultation paper was sent to 495 organisations and a summary, with a pull-out questionnaire, was sent to 162,000 farmers and growers in England and Wales. There were 103 responses to the main consultation and 2,485 responses to the summary questionnaire. A consultation report has been prepared in compliance with the Cabinet Office "Code of Practice on Consultation" and is available on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/topics/agwaste.htm

The regulations come into force on Monday 15 May 2006. The Landfill Directive's requirements, section 33(1)(c) of the 1990 Act and the duty of care under section 34 of the Act will apply from that date. However, the regulations contain transitional provisions which allow farmers six months from that date to register with the Environment Agency to transport agricultural waste on a professional basis or as a dealer or broker; and allow farmers 12 months to apply to the Agency for waste management licences, to dispose of or recover agricultural waste on-farm, or to register licensing exemptions.

A wide range of licensing exemptions will be available to farmers. As a result of discussions with the Agricultural Waste Stakeholders' Forum and public consultation, we have identified proposals for more licensing exemptions for agricultural waste covering the use of drum incinerators, waste disposal in the event of a plant health disease outbreak, the use of ash from the incineration of non-SRM pig and poultry carcasses, the use of biobeds for pesticide residues and the use of dredgings from ditch clearances. We propose to carry out a supplementary consultation exercise on these proposals for more licensing exemptions during the 12-month transitional period before the regulations' waste management licensing provisions come fully into force.

The regulations also contain related or consequential amendments to existing regulations. The main amendments are:

> To ensure continuing compliance with the Waste Framework Directive following the repeal of the Animal Waste Directive (90/667/EEC) and the introduction of the EU Animal By-Products Regulation ((EC) No. 1774/2002) which lays down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption. The proposed amendments apply to animal by-products which are waste within the meaning of Article 1(a) of the Waste Framework Directive and are not excluded from the Directive's scope under Article 2;
>
> To repeal regulation 15 of the Waste Management Licensing regulations 1994 (S.I. 1994 No. 1056 (as amended)) and to amend the Groundwater regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998 No. 2746 (as amended)) to bring waste management licensing into line with other types of "authorisations" for the purposes of complying with the Groundwater Directive (80/68/EEC); and
>
> To address another aspect of the ECJ's adverse judgment on the Waste Framework Directive infraction by amending section 33(2) of the 1990 Act to provide that section 33(1) (c) applies to household waste from a domestic property; and so to prohibit the disposal etc. of such waste by private individuals, within the curtilage of the property, in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health. The prohibition already applies to any mineral or synthetic oil or grease, asbestos and clinical waste by virtue of regulation 3(1) of the Controlled Waste regulations 1992 (S.I. 1992 No. 588).

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting in Brussels on 20 March 2006.

The Council adopted two regulations on the protection of geographical indications (GIs) and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs and on agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialties guaranteed.

The Agriculture Commissioner reported on the market situation in the poultry sector in the light of consumer reactions to avian influenza outbreaks. She said that the measures taken so far to support the sector had not adequately stabilised the market and indicated that the provision under the current legislation for exceptional measures to support the market only caters for an event of serious outbreak in the EU. She therefore announced that a new proposal to widen the scope of the current exceptional measures provision would be presented at the April Council.

The Council held a policy debate on the review of the EU sustainable development strategy based on presidency questions. I said that the top priorities should be to continue making agricultural policy more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; to promote animal health and welfare; to improve management of fish stocks by using ecosystem-based approaches; and to counter climate change. The presidency said it would take member states' comments into account when it prepares for the June European Council.

France presented a memorandum on the CAP, focusing particularly on risk and crisis management measures and simplification of legislation. The memorandum called for new EU measures to help farmers cope with their greater exposure to market fluctuations, following recent and ongoing reform. I welcomed the memorandum as a contribution to the ongoing debate on the future of the CAP and urged the Council to be cautious about introducing EU or other Government measures which contradicted the market direction of recent CAP reforms, stressing that farmers were best placed to judge what risk management measures were best suited to their businesses. The Agriculture Commissioner referred to the Commission's ongoing work on risk and crisis management and CAP simplification and gave an overview of forthcoming work to reform the fruit and vegetable and wine reform sectors towards the end of this year and the proposal for the reform of the Common Market organisation of bananas which would be presented in June.

Under any other business, the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection updated the Council on the latest situation with regard to the outbreak of avian influenza in the European Union.

The Agriculture Commissioner updated the Council on progress in the WTO agricultural negotiations, including the outcome of the G6 Trade Ministers meeting in London earlier this month.

Italy supported by Spain, Greece, Portugal, France, Malta and Cyprus urged the Commission to resume its contributions to the International Olive Oil Council promotional campaigns.

The Commission informed the Council that it intended to abolish the system of pre-payment of export refunds which fell under its competence.

The Austrian presidency announced that their informal meeting of Agriculture Ministers would take place from 28–30 May, it will focus on education, extension, research, and innovation in framing.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

FCO Website and EU Guide

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will shortly be publishing a revised Guide to the European Union (EU). At the same time the FCO will launch an updated Britain in the EU section of its website. The EU Guide and website are intended to provide more factual information in the public domain on the EU and the future of Europe debate. The EU Guide will be available in public libraries and can be requested directly from the FCO by phone, by letter or online. The website will be available at www.europe.gov.uk.

HEALTH

Health Pay Review Bodies

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I am responding on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the Twenty-first Report of the Review Body for Nursing and Other Health Professions (NOHPRB) and the Thirty-fifth Report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) which have been laid before Parliament today. Copies of the reports have been placed in the Library. I am grateful to the chairs and members of the Review Bodies for their hard work.

The NOHPRB has recommended an increase in the "Agenda for Change" pay rates of 2.5 per cent. from 1 April 2006. The NOHPRB has also recommended that the high cost area supplements should be increased by 2.5 per cent. The DDRB has recommended with effect from April 2006 general increases in remuneration of 2.2 per cent. for consultants and doctors and dentists in training, 2.4 per cent. for non-consultant career grade doctors and salaried dentists and an increase of 3.0 per cent. in gross remuneration for general dental practitioners. The DDRB has also recommended that the salary range for salaried general medical practitioners should be increased by 2.2 per cent.

The NOHPRB's pay recommendations are being accepted in full and without staging.

The DDRB's pay recommendations are being accepted. However, the award for consultants will be staged. Consultants have particularly benefited from pay reform with an average increase in earnings of 11.5 per cent. in the last two years. In considering the DDRB recommendations, it is necessary to consider a range of factors and with the National Health Service currently running a small deficit affordability must also be taken into account. Consultants will therefore receive a 1 per cent. increase from 1 April 2006 increasing to 2.2 per cent. from 1 November 2006.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): I am announcing today statistics relating to antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs).

An ASBO is a civil order that protects the community from behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.

ASBOs were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available since April 1999.

ASBOs can be issued to anyone aged 10 years or over. They impose restrictions on the behaviour of individuals who have behaved in an antisocial way and protect communities from often longstanding and highly intimidating activity.

Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and can lead to custody. The maximum penalty for breach of an ASBO is five years' imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000 for an adult offender.

The Home Office is notified by all courts of ASBOs issued. As I indicated in my statement on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, col. 52–53 WS, a joint exercise between the Court Service and the Home Office is underway to refine and improve further the collection of this data.

Data on the number of ASBOs issued are updated quarterly. New figures for the period up to September 2005 are now available. They show that for the period between April 1999 and September 2005 the total number of ASBOs issued (as reported to the Home Office) was 7,356. The number of ASBOs issued in the quarter July to September 2005 is 11 per cent. of the total number of ASBOs issued over all quarters and represents an increase of 7 per cent. on the same quarter last year. However, this represents a decrease of 14 per cent. on last quarter's figures,

Of those ASBOs issued 55 per cent. were to adults and 43 per cent. to juveniles; (per cent. of ASBOs are age unknown.

Some 46 per cent. were orders on application and 54 per cent. were orders on conviction.

I have placed with the House Libraries a briefing note containing information about ASBOs and the ASBOs statistics issued today.

Race and Criminal Justice System (Statistics)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Today the Government have published statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System. The statistics, published under section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, are one of the main sources of information available on Black and other Minority (BME) Ethnic groups' experiences across the CJS.

The Government are committed to delivering a CJS which promotes equality, does not discriminate against anyone because of their race, that has a workforce which fairly represents the communities it services and is effective in rooting out and tackling racism and racist crime.

The statistics published today show that significant progress has been made but that there is still much to do. For example on race hate crime the statistics show racist incidents recorded by the police rose in 2004–05 but that the British Crime Survey (which is a large scale survey based on reports of people's individual experience) estimated the number of racist incidents fell. That might be an indication that the progress we have made in investigating and prosecuting hate crime has given people greater confidence to report incidents and been effective in preventing them from happening.

The representation of BME groups working for CJS agencies has improved, in 2004–05 the Police, Prison, Crown Prosecution, Probation Services and Crown and Magistrates courts all recorded an increase in the number of BME staff.

There are signs that the confidence of BME groups that the CJS will treat them fairly is improving. The Government have set a target to reduce the percentage of people from BME communities who believe they would be treated worse than people from white communities by one or more CJS agency. The most recent Home Office Citizenship Survey (which is the basis for the measure) shows that, while there has not been a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of people from BME communities who believe one or more agency might discriminate against them, there has been a significant reduction in the proportion who believe it of the Courts, the Police, the CPS and the Prison Service.

But the Government are not complacent and acknowledge that there is still much to do. The statistics reveal that BME people continue to be disproportionately represented in the CJS. While that data does not necessarily mean there is discrimination it is an issue the Government are committed to addressing. In key areas such as the use of stop and search the statistics do not reveal an increase in the disproportion between different groups but neither has there been a reduction.

The Government have a programme of work to understand and address this and other issues. While the ultimate outcome of this work will be to secure a reduction in the levels of inappropriate disproportion as well as increased BME community confidence in the CIS it will take time for the initiatives to have an impact.

We will continue to use these statistics to drive forward further change by ensuring all agencies continue to scrutinise their policies and standards, and work towards ensuring services are delivered fairly to all communities.

Copies of the statistics will be placed in the House Library and can be accessed on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/section951.html.

Restructuring Probation

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Today we are publishing the Government's response to the consultation paper, "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Reoffending", published on 20 October 2005.

On 9 February 2006 we set out our five-year strategy for protecting the public and reducing reoffending. At the heart of our strategy is improved public safety and the reduction of reoffending through the development of more effective end to end management of offenders, throughout the sentence. Every offender will have a named offender manager who will be responsible for making sure that they are both punished and properly rehabilitated, and that the public are protected. They will manage the offender, often from before they are sentenced, throughout any prison sentence, and then during time on a community sentence or on licence in the community.

Regional offender managers need to be able to fund the delivery of specified contracts based on evidence of what reduces reoffending rather than leaving the prison and probation services to decide what to deliver. The current legal framework allows the Home Office to commission prison services—but not for probation. This asymmetry is one of the biggest barriers to realising our vision of joining up offender management from custody into the community. We will therefore be bringing forward legislation to improve the position.

During the consultation period we received 748 written replies and met a range of key stakeholders. The document we are publishing today summarises those replies and explains how they will be taken into account as we develop our proposals to reduce re-offending and increase public safety. We will introduce legislation to give effect to these changes as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Copies of the report are being placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Prison Service Pay Review Body

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): The Fifth Report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) on the pay of in-charge governors and operational managers, prison officers and related grades in England and Wales in 2006 has been published today and copies will be placed in the Library. I would like to thank the Chair and members of the PSPRB for their hard work in producing their recommendations.

The PSPRB have recommended an increase in basic pay for all grades of £425 or 1.6 per cent., whichever is the greater. The recommendation will lead to a growth in the pay bill of 2.57 per cent. to £849 million (excluding oncosts), which is at the upper limit of affordability.

The Home Secretary has decided that the recommendations will be implemented in full, with effect from the operative date of the award of 1 April 2006. The cost of the award will be met from within the existing budget allocation for the service.

The Government desire significant improvement in the Prison Service pay and grading structure. It is asking the trade unions to be fully engaged in talks and to commit to:

1. Participation in the development of the Service wide job evaluation system, initially through positive engagement with the eastern area pilot, which has already commenced.
2. Work in partnership with Prison Service management and take forward the principles covered in last year's heads of agreement talks.
3. Immediately reengage with the performance improvement process.
4. Reform the Whitley council arrangements with a view to establishing long-term partnership agreements based upon single table talks and compliance with the information and consultation of employees directive.

The Home Secretary expects the trade unions to engage with the Prison Service in talks towards workforce reform based on these principles. The outcome of those talks are likely to inform his remit to the Pay Review Body in respect of next year's pay review.

The key Pay Review Body recommendations, which take effect from 1 April 2006, are:

An increase in basic pay for all grades of £425 or 1.6 per cent., whichever is the greater;

Pay range minima for operational managers to be increased by six spine points, with no change to the range maxima;

Two additional rates of locality pay at £4,250 and £250. All other rates remain unchanged;

All specialist allowances to remain at their current level;

All other allowances and ex gratia payments to be uprated by 1.6 per cent.;

RHA for operational managers to be uprated by 1.6 per cent.;

Care and maintenance of dogs allowance to be uprated by 3.2 per cent.;

Notional rents to be increased by 3.2 per cent.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Pensions—Scheme Valuation

The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): The Parliamentary and Other Pensions Act 1987 requires the Government Actuary to make triennial reports on the financial position of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund. His latest report, dealing with the position of the Fund as at 1 April 2005, is published today and a copy of the report "Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund: Report by the Government Actuary on the Valuation as at 1 April 2005 [HC 979]" has been laid before the House. It includes his recommendation on the rate of Exchequer contributions to be made to the Fund, which the Act requires the Government to follow. The new rate of Exchequer contribution will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of the Act from 1 April 2006.

The Government Actuary has assessed that the underlying cost of the benefits accruing under the Parliamentary pension scheme is lower than the cost assessed at the previous actuarial valuation in 2002 (27.4 per cent. of the total pensionable payroll of scheme members compared with 28 per cent.). This is primarily because the Government Actuary has assumed, in the light of recent experience, that MPs will leave and retire at higher ages than was assumed previously. Furthermore, the Exchequer share of the underlying cost has decreased due to higher contributions being paid by most of the scheme's members. The Government Actuary expects members' contributions to total 9.3 per cent.of the payroll, compared with 8.7 per cent. at the 2002 valuation. The Exchequer's share of the underlying cost has therefore fallen from 19.3 per cent. of payroll to 18.1 per cent.

However, despite the fall in the underlying cost of accruing benefits and in the Exchequer share of that cost, the Government Actuary has recommended an increase in the level of Exchequer contributions to the Fund from the current level of 24 per cent. of payroll to a new level of 26.8 per cent. This is because there has been an increase in the deficit in the Fund (that is, a shortfall of assets to the estimated value of liabilities) since the Government Actuary's last valuation in 2002 from £25.2 million to £49.5 million. (For the purposes of the actuarial valuation, the value of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund's assets at 31 March 2005 was assessed as £278.6 million).

The deficit would have risen by around £7 million even if the experience of the scheme had developed entirely in line with the assumptions made at the 2002 valuation—because of the interest that is assumed to accrue on the deficit, and because the increase in Exchequer contributions following the previous valuation only took effect a year after the valuation date. However, the deficit has increased further because the experience of the scheme has differed from what the Government Actuary assumed at the 2002 valuation, and also because the Government Actuary has changed his assumptions about what will happen in the future.

The main area where the experience of the scheme has differed from what the Government Actuary assumed is in relation to investment returns, which were lower than expected. In common with most other pension funds and other investors in equity shares, the Fund experienced negative investment returns in the first year covered by the Government Actuary's report and positive returns in the subsequent two years. Although the investment returns over the three years as a whole were positive, they were lower than had been assumed. Overall, divergence of the scheme's experience from the Government Actuary's assumptions made at the 2002 valuation contributed around £5 million to the increased deficit.

The main area where the Government Actuary has changed his assumptions about what will happen in the future is in relation to the longevity of members. Again, in common with other pension funds, the Fund has been affected by the fact that people are living longer. The Government Actuary has assumed that the life expectancy of a 65-year old man has increased by two years to 19.5 years. Overall, changes in the Government Actuary's assumptions contributed around £13 million to the increased deficit.

The contributions by the Exchequer to the Fund have fluctuated over the years, and the Exchequer has benefited in the past from the fact that the Fund has been in surplus and that lower contributions have been paid as a result. The level of Exchequer contributions over the period 1989 to 2003 varied between 4.4 per cent. and 9.6 per cent. of payroll, representing a saving of between 6.6 per cent. and 11 per cent. of payroll over the Exchequer's share of the underlying cost of the accruing benefits.

Separately from his report on the actuarial valuation, the Government Actuary has estimated that the capitalised value as at 1 April 2005 of the saving to the Exchequer over the period 1989 to 2003 (that is, the difference between the actual level of the Exchequer contribution and the Exchequer share of the underlying cost of the accruing benefits) is £50 million.

The Government will be drawing the increased Exchequer contribution to the Fund to the attention of the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) when it next commissions the SSRB to make recommendations on the pension element of the Parliamentary remuneration package.

The increase of 2.8 per cent in the Exchequer contribution may be broken down as follows:

Lower ongoing cost of benefit accrual as a result of changes to actuarial assumptions	-0.6 per cent
Higher contributions from scheme members	-0.6 per cent
Higher deficit contributions as a result of divergence of experience from 2002 valuation assumptions	+1.5 per cent
Higher deficit contributions as a result of changes to actuarial assumptions	+2.5 per cent

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Report on the UK's Involvement with the World Bank

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of a DFID report, "The UK and the World Bank 2005".

This report explains the UK's work with the World Bank from the start of the bank's financial year 2005 (known as FY05: July 2004–June 2005) through to its annual meetings in September 2005. It sets out the positions the UK took in a number of discussions at the bank—on the bank's support to poor countries' development, its role in responding to debates on global issues such as debt, and its institutional effectiveness. The report also records the UK's position on resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors. It is an annual publication, and the next report will cover the period October 2005–September 2006.

During the year the UK: helped to secure a large increase in the aid the World Bank will give to the poorest countries via its International Development Association; brokered a historic debt deal that will write off 100 per cent. of the debt owed by the heavily indebted poor countries to the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank; encouraged the bank to step up the pace of its work in Africa with a new Africa action plan; and convinced the bank to review its use of conditionality, leading to a set of good practice principles which reflect the spirit of the UK's own policy. We will report on the implementation of these commitments in our next report on the UK and the World Bank.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Prison Service Corporate and Business Plan 2006–09

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): I have placed copies of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's Corporate and Business Plan for 2006–09 in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Corporate and Business Plan contains key performance targets I have set for the Service for 2006–07. These are:

No escape for top and high-risk prisoners.

No more than three escapes per 1,000 medium and low risk prisoners.

The number of staff assaulted by prisoners is less than a ratio of three per 100 prisoners.

The number of prisoners assaulted by prisoners is less than a ratio of four per 100 prisoners.

An average of at least 20 hours constructive activity per week for each sentenced prisoner.

An average of at least 10 hours constructive activity per week for each remand prisoner.

To ensure 87 per cent. of prisoners serving six months or more are working to a resettlement plan and that 97 per cent. of lifers work to a life sentence plan, including preparation of the plan, within the first six months of sentence.

Each member of staff should receive an average of five training days.

Reduce the rate of absenteeism across the Service to 13.75 days per head by 2006–07 with an overall reduction in sick absence of 30 per cent. by 2009–10.

Lay the Annual Report and Audited Accounts before Parliament prior to the summer recess.

Ensure the average cost per prisoner place does not exceed £85,250.

Prison Service Pay Review Body

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): The fourth report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) on the pay of governor and officer grades in the Northern Ireland Prison Service has been published today.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has decided that the recommendations will be implemented in full, with effect from the operative date of the award of 1 April 2006. The cost of the award will be met from within the existing budget allocation for the service.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

PRIME MINISTER

Wilson Doctrine

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): In answer to questions in the House of Commons on 17 November 1966, the then Prime Minister, the right hon. Harold Wilson MP, said that he had given instructions that there was to be no tapping of the telephones of Members of Parliament and that if there were a development which required a change of policy he would at such a moment as was compatible with the security of the country make a statement in the House about it. This approach, known as the Wilson Doctrine, has been maintained under successive administrations.

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 updated existing laws and set in place new legal procedures governing the interception of communications carried on both public and private telecommunications systems. I advised the House in a Written Ministerial Statement on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 173WS, that I had received advice from the Interception of Communications Commissioner, the right hon. Sir Swinton Thomas, on his view of the implications for the Wilson Doctrine of the regulatory framework established under that Act.

It was Sir Swinton's advice, taking into account the new and robust regulatory framework governing interception and the changed circumstances since 1966, that the Wilson Doctrine should not be sustained.

I have considered Sir Swinton's advice very seriously, together with concerns expressed in this House in response to my written ministerial statement on 15 December. I have decided that the Wilson Doctrine should be maintained.

Review Body on Senior Salaries

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The 28th report of the Review Body on Senior Salaries, which makes recommendations about the pay of the senior civil service, senior military personnel and the judiciary, is being published today. Copies are in the Vote Office and the Library of the House. I am grateful to the Chairman and members of the Review Body for their work.

Senior Civil Service

The Review Body's main recommendations for senior civil servants' pay are:

i. changes to senior civil service pay ranges as follows:

Pay Band	*Minimum £*	*Recruitment & Performance Ceiling £*
1	55,000	116,000
1A	64,000	127,000
2	80,000	160,000
3	98,000	205,000

ii. individual base pay awards to range from 0 to 9 per cent. depending on performance and relative contribution;

iii. the minimum non-consolidated bonus payment to rise to £3,000; and

iv. the Permanent Secretaries new range to be £137,000 to £273,250.

The Review Body endorses the Government's strategy for senior reward including:

i. an increase in the senior civil service paybill of 1.75 per cent.; and

ii. an increase in the non-consolidated bonus pot of 1.2 per cent. of paybill.

The Government have decided in the light of what is affordable within expenditure plans and the specific circumstances relating to the senior civil service that the increase in paybill proposed by the Review Body should be implemented in two stages. 1 per cent. will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2006, and the remainder with effect from 1 November 2006. The increase in the non-consolidated bonus pot will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2006.

Senior Military Personnel

The Review Body's main recommendation for the senior military is an increase of 3 per cent. in the incremental pay scales for senior military officers. The Government accept the recommendations for the senior military and they will be implemented in full from 1 April 2006.

The Judiciary

The Review Body's main recommendations for the judiciary are:

i. an increase averaging 3.4 per cent. for judicial salaries. The range is from 2 per cent. for some office holders to 6.4 per cent. for the Lord Chief Justice; and

ii. the repositioning within the judicial salary structure of a small number of posts.

The Government have decided in the light of what is affordable within expenditure plans and the specific circumstances relating to the judiciary that the increases proposed by the Review Body should be paid in two stages. All office holders will receive 1 per cent. with effect from 1 April 2006, and the balance of the recommended amount will be paid with effect from 1 November 2006.

The recommendations for repositioning certain offices, which arise from a major review of the judicial salary structure, will be implemented.

Members of Parliament and Ministers

Pay increases for Members of Parliament and Ministers are linked automatically to the movement of the mid point of the pay bands for the senior civil service. This therefore results in an increase to their salaries of 2 per cent. However, the Government proposes that this increase should also be paid in two stages—1 per cent. with effect from 1 April 2006, and the remainder with effect from 1 November 2006.

Departmental Expenditure Limits

The cost of the awards for the senior civil service, senior military personnel, the judiciary and Ministers will be met from within existing departmental expenditure limits.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority/British Nuclear Group

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): I have this week written to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, to confirm that I have approved its first strategy. Full details will be provided by the NDA when it publishes the strategy later today.

After carefully considering the views of key stakeholders, including the NDA, the regulators and the unions, I have also agreed the recommendation of the BNFL board that it should sell British Nuclear Group through a competitive sale process. The process will coincide with the letting by the NDA of a new five-year contract for Sellafield and is in line with their strategy to develop a competitive market in decommissioning and bring in private sector expertise to improve performance. BNFL and the NDA will therefore work in close co-operation, with the aim of ensuring that the successful bidder is the best available to improve performance, particularly at Sellafield. I would expect the sale to be completed by autumn 2007.

I firmly believe that a competitive sale is in BNFL's best commercial interest and represents British Nuclear Group's best chance of operating successfully in the commercial market created by the Energy Act 2004. Bringing in external expertise more quickly contributes to improved clean-up performance for the NDA and is therefore good for the tax payer. BNFL will be holding media briefings later today to provide fuller details.

Offshore Electricity Transmission

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I am making today a statement to the House to announce the Government's decision on the high level regulatory regime to be put in place to regulate offshore electricity transmission.

This is a key step in the delivery of the targets, goals and aspirations for renewable generation set out in the 2003 Energy White Paper: "Our Energy Future—Creating a Low Carbon Economy".

The White Paper set out four key goals of energy policy:

> To put the UK on a path to cut carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by some 60 per cent. by about 2050.
>
> To maintain the reliability of energy supplies.
>
> To promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond.
>
> To ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

Offshore renewable energy can make a major contribution to the delivery of the Government's target of 10 per cent. renewable energy by 2010. Currently there is no regulatory regime in place covering the transmission connection of our second round of offshore wind farms (and the other marine renewables that may follow them) to the onshore electricity grid. However, the Energy Act 2004 gives the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry various powers to set up a regulatory regime for offshore transmission.

The Government's aim has been to introduce a regulatory regime that facilitates the connection of a proportion of Round 2 (R2) projects in time to contribute to the 2010 target. That objective includes ensuring efficiency of connections and allowing for fair and open access for offshore generators.

In making my decision I have sought to balance the achievement of the four White Paper goals. The right balance also needs to be struck between the interests of all stakeholders including consumers, offshore developers, transmission companies, and other generators. Grid connections are likely to form 10–15 per cent. of capital costs for the round two wind farms given the considerable cable lengths involved. Certainty about how the grid connection costs will be funded, and the regulation that controls them, is a key factor that developers need in preparing their business models.

Broadly speaking the consultation document sought views from stakeholders on two high level options for this offshore regime. The main options set out were:

Extension of arrangements broadly similar to the existing onshore regulated price control approach offshore.

A light touch regulatory approach with developers directly responsible for funding and construction of cable connections to the onshore system—the licence merchant approach.

A third option was also included which is a sub-set of the first option above:

Extension of the existing onshore system offshore but with the addition of some limitation of the highest transmission charges.

The approach

I am announcing that the existing onshore regulated price control approach to electricity transmission should be extended offshore, and ruling out the licensed merchant approach.

In making this decision I have also noted that this was also the option supported by the majority of respondents to the consultation exercise.

I have concluded that the regulated price control approach has a number of clear advantages. Extending the regulated price control approach offshore will ensure consistency with the regulatory arrangements onshore. It will provide a financial benefit to offshore developers by spreading the costs they face to connect to the onshore electricity system over a number of years. The regulated price control approach will also mean that the responsibility for developing the offshore transmission network will be shared by the System Operator and the Transmission Asset Owners. This should help to ensure that the Government's renewable energy targets are achieved.

In taking this decision I have sought to put in place a regulatory framework that includes a fair and transparent approach to transmission costs consistent with those faced by onshore generators. At this stage there is insufficient information to indicate that the level of transmission charges offshore would deter renewable generation. Based on the information currently available the Secretary of State does not foresee a need to consider capping transmission charges offshore for the planned round two wind power projects. However, he will continue to keep this under consideration as different offshore technologies develop, taking account of the Government's targets and aspirations for the generation of electricity from renewable energy sources and the cost to consumers being acceptable. Full consultation with all interested stakeholders on any future proposal of this sort would be essential.

It is likely to be at least eighteen months before the necessary programme of technical work to determine the level of charging is completed, by which time the Energy Review will have concluded. The impact of those charges could therefore be considered in the context of any conclusions that have emerged from the review.

It is important to bear in mind that regulated price control offshore, while providing the advantages to generators that I mention above, would still involve the charges they face being based on the costs of their connections. The main consideration with the options consulted on was how these costs will be financed. Under the regulated price control approach the costs will be recovered from developers through an annual transmission charge over a fixed period. Under the licensed merchant approach the cost of building the connection would have been met by developers upfront themselves. Only under the price control approach with capping would there be an extra element of cross-subsidisation from other users of the system.

A fuller consideration of the issues behind my decision can be found in the "Government Response to the joint DTI/Ofgem Public Consultation on the Regulation of Offshore Electricity Transmission", which is published today and is available in the Library of the House, together with an updated Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Companies House

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Barry Gardiner): I have set Companies House the following targets for the year 2006–07:

To ensure that the following services: Companies House Direct, WebCheck, and Web-Filing, are available for 99 per cent. of the time between the hours of 7am and midnight, Monday to Saturday.

To achieve 40 per cent. take-up for electronic submission of documents[1] by the end of 2006–07 and 75 per cent. take-up by the end of 2007–08.

To achieve, on average, a monthly compliance rate for accounts submitted of 95.5 per cent.

To ensure that of 99.5 per cent. of images placed on the Companies House image system are legible.

To achieve for 2007–08 a reduction in real terms of 10 per cent. compared to 2004–05, in the unit cost of the range of transactions covering registration, company search and active register size.

To achieve a score of more than 85 per cent. in each quarterly Companies House customer satisfaction survey.

To resolve 97 per cent. of complaints within five days.

Central Government Targets

These are targets that are common to other executive agencies:

To achieve, taking one year with another, a 3.5 per cent. average rate of return based on the operating surplus expressed as a percentage of average net assets.

To pay all bills due within 30 days, or on other agreed credit terms, on receipt of goods or services or a valid invoice whichever is later.

The Chief Executive to reply within 10 days to all letters from Members of Parliament delegated to her for reply.

Protecting Vulnerable Workers, Supporting Good Employers

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): The Government are publishing today our strategy to protect vulnerable workers and support good employers. The document sets out the Government's commitments on employment relations policy.

The Government have combined social justice and economic efficiency, showing that fairness and decent minimum standards are not barriers to jobs and growth. The Government have helped millions of people back into work at the same time as providing a step change in the minimum standards people are entitled to expect in the workplace.

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[1] A document is an individual transaction that a company can make with Companies House to submit or register information.

The Government are honouring our manifesto commitments and are providing certainty about our programme of domestic employment legislation.

Copies of the document have been placed in the Library together with the regulatory impact assessment.

TRANSPORT

Crossrail (Tunnelling Strategy)

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): The Government are aware of the concerns that have been expressed by the London borough of Tower Hamlets and others in the borough about the impacts of Crossrail in Tower Hamlets. Many of those concerns centre on the works proposed in the Bill in and around Hanbury street to use a site for launching tunnel boring machines and associated works at Pedley street and Mile End Park for removal of excavated material.

After many months of detailed work with Cross London Rail Links (CLRL) and Transport for London, a solution has been identified that should significantly reduce the implications of Crossrail works for the local community.

The work carried out by CLRL has involved a fundamental review of its tunnelling strategy. CLRL has concluded that by a major recasting of the construction programme it is possible to accommodate the major part of the tunnelling activities from the two tunnel boring machine launch sites already proposed at Royal Oak in west London and between Canary Wharf and Custom House in the Docklands area of east London. As a result Crossrail would not need to launch tunnel boring machines from Hanbury Street in east London.

The new tunnelling strategy will significantly reduce the environmental impacts of Crossrail construction in the borough of Tower Hamlets, and we believe they would be positive overall for London. There would be no need for the works between Hanbury street and Pedley street or the conveyor along the Great Eastern main line. Mile End Park would not be needed as a site for stockpiling excavated material. A shaft will still need to be constructed at Hanbury street for ventilation and intervention, but this will be a much smaller structure involving less work and so reducing disruption to the local community. I have asked CLRL urgently to consider these residual impacts so that they can be further ameliorated. An environmental assessment of the alternative strategy will be published in due course.

LRL's assessment is that constructing the central Crossrail tunnel in this new way will not increase overall the project's programme or budget.

LRL will in due course write to all affected petitioners setting out the details of the alternative tunnelling strategy and the implications for Hanbury street. This will happen in good time for hearings on these issues in the Bill Select Committee.

Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group

The Minister of State for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I am announcing today the Secretary of State's targets for 2006–07 in respect of the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport (Alistair Darling), has set a range of high-level targets for the 2006–07 year on behalf of the agencies within the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group: the Driving Standards Agency, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, the Vehicle Certification Agency and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. They are included in the agencies' business plans together with their associated measures. The plans also include a range of management targets, performance indicators and key tasks which are appropriate to the agencies' businesses and which reflect the wider DVO change agenda. Copies of the business plans will be placed in the Library shortly.

The key targets for the Driving Standards Agency are:

Secretary of State Targets

Appointments available within nine weeks at 90 per cent. of permanent car driving test centres by 31 March 2006.

In order to provide off road motorcycle test facilities to comply with EU requirements to have 20 multi-purpose test centres operational by 31 March 2007.

To achieve candidate satisfaction with the overall service received at 90 per cent. or better.

Improve driving standards of new drivers.

Improve standards of professional lorry and bus drivers.

Improve driving standards of existing drivers.

In order to raise the standards of tuition and to prevent unqualified ADIs giving instruction to learner drivers, from January 2007 remove ADIs from the Register who failed to pass the HPT by 31 December 2006.

Maximise staff productivity—Have no more than 10 per cent. of non-productive examiner time during 2006–07.

Maximise electronic take-up—Develop electronic services to provide greater choice and achieve 60 per cent. of theory test bookings and 50 per cent. of car practical test bookings being made on-line by 31 March 2007.

Deliver value for money plan improvements by March 2007.

The key targets for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency are:

Secretary of State Targets

Maintain or improve on the standard of services to the customer.

Maintain or improve customer satisfaction at the 2005–06 level of 88 per cent.

Deliver customer choice for operational services through increasing the number of inbound services available via electronic channels.

Maintain 97.5 per cent. of current vehicle keepers as the level to be successfully traced from the record.

Work with the Insurance Industry to deliver enforcement of insurance from the record (*subject to implementation of the Road Safety Bill*).

By 31 January 2007

Reduce VED evasion loss to 2.9 per cent.

Reduce the number of persistent evaders of VED from the June 2002 figure by 50 per cent.

Deliver the benefits agreed in the value for money plan:

Financial VfM gain;

Reduction in workforce;

Delivery of additional VED;

Delivery of additional net income from Sale of Marks and income from Cherished Transfers.

Deliver a programme of e-service capability across the consumer, commercial and business sectors.

The key targets for the Vehicle Certification Agency are:

Secretary of State Targets

To be the class leader in acceptance of type approval certificates by other authorities.

Improve customer satisfaction rating in core MSC market sector.

Development of consumer information for secondary safety systems.

Target new emerging manufacturing markets to ensure that products fully meet EU standards.

Develop capability for virtual testing, and conduct one parallel virtual/physical test.

Carry out and enforce an annual programme of in-service emissions testing.

Achieve a surplus on a full cost basis and deliver benefits consistent with the value for money plan.

Increase utilisation by an additional three percentage points.

The key targets for the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency are:

Secretary of State Targets

To maintain or improve customer satisfaction at 2005–06 levels.

To improve the consistency of VOSA's vehicle testing service across the country.

To contribute to making journeys more reliable on the strategic road network, improving road safety and minimising congestion, by working in partnership with the Highways Agency and targeting "at risk" vehicles.

To contribute to improved road safety by reducing the administrative burden of commercial operation and increasingly targeting enforcement on non-compliant vehicles and drivers.

To deliver VOSA's value for money plan.

Increase the take-up of electronic services available to customers.

European Transport Council

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I attended the Transport Council in Brussels on 27 March.

The Council's main item was a debate on the draft Public Service Obligation (PSO) regulation which would provide new rules for public funding of rail and road passenger transport services. The discussion focused on the extent of permissible exemptions from competitive tendering, measures to prevent distortion of competition and the status of contracts concluded before any new regulation comes into force.

Most member states could accept the possibility of contracts for long-distance, regional and suburban rail services being directly awarded without competition. But, the majority could not accept that authorities should also be free to award bus and light rail contracts directly to an operator of their choice. I stated that the UK opposed any extension of the power directly to award contracts beyond the long-distance and regional rail markets, which the Council had accepted in December.

On behalf of the UK I argued for additional measures to be put in place to prevent distortions of competition by operators in receipt of directly awarded contracts. The UK received limited support for such measures, with most member states believing the Commission's proposal contained sufficient safeguards.

Most member states favoured the continuation of existing contracts until their expiry date, particularly if the contracts had been awarded on a competitive basis.

In conclusion, the Austrian presidency invited Coreper to resume its detailed examination of the proposal with a view to bringing a text to the Council for agreement in June.

The Council also held a discussion on road safety. The Commissioner stressed the value of recently agreed road safety legislation, but noted that further work was necessary. The Commission will therefore shortly come forward with new proposals to meet the objectives of the road safety action plan. The proposals will include minimum safety standards for new roads on the trans-European network, improved cross-border recognition of the most frequent breaches of road safety law, a requirement for retrofitting dead-angle mirrors, and a requirement for the fitting and use of day-time running lights. The UK has concerns about some of these measures and we will need to consider them very carefully.

The Council also heard the Commissioner's presentation on the communication on the promotion of inland waterway transport ("NAIADES"). The proposal includes a number of strands to revitalise Inland Waterway transport in order to reduce traffic congestion and harmful effects on the environment. The Austrian presidency indicated they want to agree Council conclusions on this proposal in June.

The Council reached a general approach on aviation security. The proposal, if political agreement is achieved, will update the existing Regulation 2320/02. The new proposal would help to clarify, simplify, and further harmonise legal requirements with the aim of enhancing overall security in civil aviation. The Council also took note that the Commission would complete its study on financing of security by the end of 2006.

The Council heard the Commissioner's progress report on the SESAR proposal, the project for implementation of the Single European Sky (air traffic management). The Commissioner explained that the proposal would establish a Joint Undertaking to manage the development of a new air traffic management system, which would improve air safety and reduce the environmental impact of aviation. The project would be supported by the European Community, Eurocontrol and industry, and also possibly third countries in the future. The Austrian presidency hopes to reach a general approach at the June Transport Council.

The Council received a progress report from the Commissioner on the air transport negotiations between the EU and the US. He reported that the US Government aims to finalise its rule on airline control by the end of April. In the Commissioner's view, and provided the US proposals were acceptable, this timeframe could allow Ministerial approval at the June Transport Council and a signature at the EU-US summit on 21 June.

The Council was able to agree conclusions and to grant the Commission a mandate to take forward negotiations with Russia regarding Siberian overflight payments.

The Commissioner gave a progress report on the Galileo satellite navigation project. The second round of negotiations with the consortium bidding for the PPP concession have begun, and the contract is expected to conclude by the end of the year. The most difficult issues so far were: risk sharing between the public and the private sectors; and design risk. The Commissioner will provide a further update on development at the June Transport Council and would inform member states on the outcome of the negotiations as soon as they were known. The presidency noted that it would be important to provide information to member states in sufficient time to allow them to make an assessment of the outcome of the negotiations before the contract was signed.

The presidency noted that member states had responded in writing to the three questions on the EU strategy for sustainable development proposed by a Friends of the Presidency group to inform debate at the next European Council. The Austrian presidency will produce a summary.

The Council achieved a political agreement without debate on the draft recast directive on driving licences. I abstained on behalf of the UK. While, the Government support much of the text; the Government were concerned about the provisions on motorcycle staging. The Government considered that the system for motorcycle staging will create significant difficulty for our motorcyclists, with no tangible benefit for road safety in the UK. The Government tabled a minutes statement making our objections clear.

Without debate, the Council accepted the European Parliament's 2nd Reading amendments to its common position on the Eurovignette directive, which will establish new Community rules for the charging of heavy goods vehicles. This agreement between the Council and Parliament was facilitated during the UK presidency.

There were a number of additional AOB points of which the most significant were:

The Commission reported on supply chain security and noted that there was already legislation on airports, port facilities and on the ports themselves. This proposal served as a way of linkage to increase security of the supply chain. The proposal would be a voluntary system to provide a quality label of "safe operators" showing that they complied with minimum standards. The Commission said that the benefit for safe operators would be reduced checks and paperwork which could give them a competitive advantage.

The Commission presented its proposed directive on promotion of clean road vehicles. The Environment Council will be taking forward this proposal for which 25 per cent. of publicly procured vehicles over 3.5 tonnes will be required meet enhanced environmentally friendly vehicle standards.

The Commission informed the Council that it had withdrawn the proposal on access to port services. The forthcoming Commission review of the EU Transport Policy White Paper would include a chapter on ports focusing on transparent financing of port operations and the application of competition rules.

During lunch there was a discussion of the Commission's mid-term review of the EU Transport Policy White Paper. There was a consensus that the proposed shift away from focusing on modal shift to an approach that makes the best use of each mode was a sensible approach. There was also a discussion on the response of the transport sector to a possible future (human) flu pandemic, during which there was an agreement to share best practice.

Highways Agency

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): The Highways Agency's 2006–07 business plan is published today and contains eight key indicators for the agency to deliver by 31 March 2007. These are:

Indicator	*06–07 Target*
Deliver the PSA target to make journeys more reliable on the strategic road network by 2007–08.	Make journeys more reliable on the strategic road network by ensuring that the average vehicle delay on the 10% slowest journeys is less in 2007–08 than the baseline period.
1. Deliver improved management of the strategic road network.	Assess the impact of the Agency's initiatives to improve journey time reliability by end October 2006, using the information to shape forward delivery programmes and produce a delivery trajectory by December 2006. Achieve full capability of the HA Traffic Officer service across all 7 Regional Control Centres (RCCs) by December 2006.
2. Deliver the programme of improvements to the strategic road network.	Achieve at least 2023 of 2129 progress points for delivery of the strategic roads programme. Introduce controlled use of hard shoulder on the Active Traffic Management (ATM) pilot on the M42 by March 2007.

Indicator	*06–07 Target*
	Complete a cumulative total of at least 74 of 92 priority action sites at junctions.
3. Deliver improvements to journeys by making information available to influence travel behaviour and inform decisions.	Evaluate the influence on driver behaviour of information channels currently available and during 2006–07 develop an improvement action plan for implementation on 2007–08.
	In line with the Highways Agency Information Strategy develop, for Ministerial approval, 3 new cost effective driver information services which contribute to improving journey reliability and safety for our customers.
	Evaluate the impact of those travel plans introduced in 2005–06 and in light of the experience gained, introduce at least 7 travel plans (making a cumulative total of at least 10) by March 2007.
Deliver the Agency's agreed proportion of the national road casualty reduction target.	Reduce by a third (i.e. to 2244) the number of people killed/seriously injured on the core network compared with the 1994–98 average of 3366.
4. Deliver improvements on the network to reduce the number of people killed/ seriously injured.	Reduce by at least 748 to 2618.
5. Maintain the network in a safe and serviceable condition.	Maintain a road surface condition index score of 100 ± 1
6. Mitigate the potentially adverse impact of strategic roads and take opportunities to enhance the environment taking into account value for money. Deliver the Highway's Agency's contribution to the Department's joint PSA target for air quality.	Achieve an average score of no less than 95% across the 5 sub targets
	Air Quality: implement measures to improve the air quality in at least 2 prioritised Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) making cumulative total of 4 completed improvements in the 28 priority areas.
	Biodiversity: Achieve at least 7% of the published HA Biodiversity Action Plan, which extends across 15 targets (making a cumulative total of 41% of the HA BAP complete).
	Landscape: Introduce at least 9 planting schemes to enhance the landscape.
	Noise: Treat at least 110 lane km of concrete road surface with lower noise surfacing.
	Water: Treat at least 4 pollution risk water outfall sites.
	Improve the environmental performance of major schemes by improving the average score for the environmental sub-criteria in the Appraisal Summary Table, in at least 5 out of the 10 sub-criteria.
7. Deliver a high level of road user satisfaction.	Achieve an overall customer satisfaction level score of at least 82% on Trunk Roads and at least 84% on Motorways across core objectives: Journey time reliability Safety Environment
8. Deliver the Highways Agency's contribution to the Department's efficiency target	Deliver efficiency improvements in roads procurement through adding value to service delivery of £132m in 2006–07.
	Deliver our programme within the allocated administration budget, which requires an efficiency improvement of at least 2.5% per annum.

Explanatory notes against each of these indicators are provided in the business plan, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Copies of the Highways Agency Information Strategy have also been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Government Car and Despatch Agency

The Minister of State for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I am pleased to announce the Secretary of State for Transport's targets for 2006–07 in respect of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA). The Secretary of State has set a range of high-level targets for the 2006–07 year on behalf of the GCDA. They will be included in the Agency's Business Plan together with their associated measures. The plan will also include a range of management targets, performance indicators and key tasks which are appropriate to the Agency's business. Copies of the Business Plan will be placed in the Library in due course.

The key targets for the Government Car and Despatch Agency are:

Secretary of State Targets

To break even on an accruals basis.

To maintain a customer satisfaction index score at least at 2005–06 levels of 86.7.

To maintain accreditation for ISO 9001.

By March 2007 to reduce the average tailpipe emissions of the Government fleet by 5 per cent. compared with March 2006 levels.

To increase the use of alternative engine and fuel technology in GCDA vehicles by 10 per cent. by March 2007 against 2005–06 levels.

To reduce the administrative charges to customers by 2 per cent. against 2005–06.

Railways (North-East)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): Today the Department for Transport has published the North East Regional Planning Assessment for the railways (RPA), the second in a series of 11 RPAs covering England and Wales. The north-east RPA covers the north-east of England region and a small part of North Yorkshire where the railway services are closely linked to the north-east network.

RPAs are the key link between regional spatial planning (including preparation of regional transport strategies) and planning for the railway by both Government and the rail industry and are designed to inform the development of the Government's strategy for the railway. They look at the challenges and options for development of the railway in each region over the next 20 years, in the wider context of forecast change in population, the economy and travel behaviour. An RPA does not commit the Government to specific proposals. Instead it sets out the Government's current thinking on how the railway might best be developed to allow wider planning objectives for a region to be met, and identifies the priorities for further development work.

The area covered by the north-east RPA has a population of just over 2.5 million, mainly concentrated around the two major conurbations of Tyne and Wear and the Tees-Valley. While population levels are not expected to grow significantly, structural changes in the type of employment available are expected to increase labour market participation rates and prosperity for residents of the region. In general, greater prosperity can be expected to lead to more trips and longer travel distances for all types of journey. Growth in rail passenger journeys is forecast for the region and it is expected that there will be particular growth in longer distance journeys, linking the north-east to other regions.

Planning for railways in the north-east needs to take into account a changing economic and social context. Rail has a part to play in addressing national and regional government agencies' aims to close the gap that has opened up between the prosperity of the north-east and the rest of the UK over the next decade. This aim is the prime objective of recent initiatives such as the Northern Way, which have influenced the formulation of the north-east RPA.

The RPA clarifies the role of the railway in the region, its contribution to the economy and its place in the overall transport system, setting out where greater rail capability and capacity will be needed over the next 20 years, and the options for responding to that need. In the shorter term it recommends optimising timetables, improving accessibility and interchanges, and matching resources to demand best to use existing capacity and improve performance.

Copies of the document have been placed in the House Library.

Safety Cameras

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I have today approved the operational cases submitted by the 38 safety camera partnerships in England and Wales to enable them to continue as part of the national safety camera programme in 2006–07.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport announced on 15 December 2005, 2006–07 will be the last year of the safety camera programme under the current netting-off funding arrangements.

The Department has worked closely with the safety camera partnerships to help them to develop operational cases for 2006–07, which will ensure that all camera activities continue to contribute to reducing speeds and casualties and assist in the achievement of the 2010 casualty reduction targets.

All activities and camera sites will comply with the "Handbook of Rules and Guidance for the Safety Camera Programme in England and Wales for 2006–07" which we published on 30 January 2006.

In 2006–07, the 38 operational cases project that there will be, in total:

Expenditure of approximately £109 million.

Fixed penalties of approximately £120 million.

Some 300,000 speeding offenders referred to speed awareness courses, which are being rolled out nationally by the Association of Chief Police Officers from 1 April 2006.

Some 233 new safety camera sites (fixed, mobile, route and red light).

Some 30 existing sites decommissioned.

Below is a table which shows a breakdown for each partnership.

		New sites proposed					
Partnership	*Proposed Total Expenditure*	*Fixed*	*Mobile*	*Red Light*	*Route*	*Total*	*Sites to be decommissioned in 2006-07*
Avon & Somerset	£4,618,076	0	0	0	0	0	4
Bedfordshire	£2,683,684	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambridgeshire	£1,294,346	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cheshire	£1,859,491	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleveland	£1,360,810	0	2	0	0	2	0
Cumbria	£2,337,328	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derbyshire	£1,651,150	1	3	0	0	4	0
Devon & Cornwall	£2,907,034	0	12	1	0	13	2
Dorset	£3,111,530	0	3	0	0	3	1
Essex	£4,318,462	5	21	0	0	26	0
Gloucestershire	£721,256	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gtr Manchester	£3,148,769	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hampshire	£2,809,805	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hertfordshire	£2,841,000	0	2	0	0	2	0
Humberside	£2,356,799	1	0	0	2	3	0
Kent	£2,958,577	1	8	1	0	10	0
Lancashire	£2,832,446	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leicestershire	£1,574,406	0	5	0	1	6	1
Lincolnshire	£1,475,325	0	1	0	0	1	1
London	£10,219,014	21	0	0	0	21	5
Merseyside	£1,672,308	4	23	0	0	27	0
Norfolk	£1,337,916	2	9	0	10	21	0
North Wales	£3,187,055	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	£2,880,879	1	7	1	0	9	0
Northumbria	£2,577,231	1	10	3	0	14	0
Nottingham	£3,372,726	5	4	0	0	9	0

		New sites proposed					
Partnership	*Proposed Total Expenditure*	*Fixed*	*Mobile*	*Red Light*	*Route*	*Total*	*Sites to be decommissioned in 2006-07*
South Wales	£5,942,575	0	0	0	0	0	2
South Yorkshire	£3,131,522	3	7	1	0	11	0
Staffordshire	£2,211,634	0	0	0	0	0	1
Suffolk	£1,990,180	0	0	0	0	0	0
Surrey	£1,596,551	2	2	1	0	5	0
Sussex	£2,613,412	3	2	0	0	5	0
Thames Valley	£5,375,651	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warwickshire	£2,552,000	2	3	1	0	6	0
West Mercia	£2,629,648	1	1	0	0	2	0
West Midlands	£3,179,139	0	0	0	0	0	10
West Yorkshire	£3,253,970	6	23	0	0	29	0
Wiltshire	£2,743,808	0	4	0	0	4	0
Total	£109,327,513	59	152	9	13	233	30

London and Continental Railways

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I reported on 14 February 2006 that my Department has been considering its future relationship with London and Continental Railways (LCR) who are responsible for the construction and operation of Channel Tunnel Rail Link and had also been independently approached by a third party, with an interest in the potential acquisition of the shareholders' interests in LCR. I announced on 1 March 2006 that, given such interest, the best way of delivering continuing value for money for the taxpayer would be for there to be an open, transparent, competitive process and that my Department was discussing this approach with LCR's shareholders.

Having considered the matter, it is clear that certain shareholders do not wish to sell their shares at this time. Meanwhile, LCR and its shareholders have proposed a significant overhaul of the future relationship with the Department, which I welcome. There is therefore no need to proceed with a competitive process now. My main concern is to secure best value for taxpayers as well as continuing value for money and so we will look again with shareholders at a later stage, probably once the Channel Tunnel Rail Link has been commissioned, which we expect to be in 2007.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Advance from the Contingencies Fund

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. John Hutton): The approval of the Department for Work and Pensions spring supplementary estimate via the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No 2) Bill will not occur until the end of the month. Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,252,950,000 has been sought in the Department's spring supplementary estimate. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £750,000,000 will be met by a repayable cash advance from the contingencies fund.

Discretionary Loans Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): I am pleased to announce changes to the discretionary loans scheme from 3 April 2006.

We have greatly simplified the rules for determining the size of the maximum budgeting loan amount that can be offered to eligible applicants. There are now only three rates that can be offered: one for single people; one for couples without children; one for families with children.

The complex "double debt" rule is abolished so that those applicants with existing budgeting loan debt have more help available to them. This, and the simpler rules for determining size of the maximum budgeting loan, means that applicants will understand better the help that is available and when they can access it.

We have increased the overall limit on loan amounts that any applicant can borrow from the social fund. At the same time we are reducing the highest loan repayment rates and giving applicants longer to repay their loan debt.

Also from 3 April 2006, budgeting loan applicants will benefit from being able to have more savings before any budgeting loan award is affected. The capital limit is doubled to £1,000 (under pension age) and £2,000 (pension age).

Overall this is a significant package of changes. Also, in making loans more affordable and easier to access, we aim to help people avoid alternative high cost lenders.

Agency Target and Business Plans 2006–07

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. John Hutton): I am today able to announce the annual performance targets in 2006–07 for each of the executive agencies of the Department for Work and Pensions. The targets I have agreed are set out below.

Further information on the plans of the Pension Service, Child Support Agency, Disability and Carers Service and the Rent Service in 2006–07 is contained in their individual business plans which have been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library. Copies of the Jobcentre Plus business plan will be made available in due course.

Jobcentre Plus

2006–07 *Job Outcomes Target (JOT)*
To achieve a total points score of 13,500,000 based on the job outcomes Jobcentre Plus achieves

* As JOT is a new measure the JOT points level is not comparable to the level set under the Job Entry Target for 2005–06.

2006–07
Job Outcomes Target (JOT)

Business Delivery Target
To ensure that specified key Jobcentre Plus business processes are delivered efficiently, accurately and to specified standards in 94 per cent. of cases checked.

Components	*Planning Assumption*
income support accuracy	90 per cent.
jobseeker's allowance accuracy	94 per cent.
labour market interventions	96 per cent.
incapacity benefit accuracy	95 per cent.
lone parent review work focused interviews	95 per cent.

Monetary Value of Fraud and Error Target

By March 2007 to continue to ensure that losses from fraud and error in working age income support and jobseeker's allowance amount to no more than current (March 2006) levels of loss or no more than 5.2 per cent. of the monetary value of these benefits paid during the year, whichever represents the lower figure (as measured against the 1998 baseline).

Customer Service Target
To achieve an 84 per cent. customer service level in the delivery of the standards set out in the Customers and Employers Charters.

Employer Outcome Target
At least 86 per cent. of employers placing their vacancies with Jobcentre Plus will have a positive outcome.

Average Actual Clearance Times Target
To process claims, within specified average actual clearance times for incapacity benefit, income support and jobseeker's allowance—18 days, 11 days, and 12 days respectively.

The Pension Service

By 2008, be paying pension credit to at least 3.2 million pensioner households while maintaining a focus on the most disadvantaged by ensuring that at least 2.2 million households are in receipt of the guarantee credit.

Improve working age individuals' awareness of their retirement provision such that by 2007–08 some 15.4 million individuals are regularly issued a pension forecast and 60,000 successful pension traces are undertaken a year.

Issue winter fuel payments for 2006–07 (over 99 per cent. of all automatic payments and successful claims received before 23 September 2006) by Christmas 2006.

Reduce sick absence rates to 8 days per capita.

Ensure that 95 per cent. of telephone calls received by the Pension Service centres are answered by customer advisors and less than 1 per cent. of attempted telephone calls receive the engaged tone or message.

Achieve a pension credit accuracy rate of at least 96 per cent.

Achieve a state pensions claims accuracy rate of at least 98 per cent.

Child Support Agency

Collection rate: new and old scheme

By 31 March 2007, where maintenance is paid through the collection service the Agency will collect, on average across both the new and old schemes, 90 per cent. of the amount due.

Maintenance outcome

By 31 March 2007, in 65 per cent. of cases across both the new and old schemes in which a liability to pay maintenance exists, the non resident parent has either made a payment via the collection service, or a maintenance direct arrangement is in place. In addition, further ensuring that at least this level of performance is achieved for those new scheme cases in which the parent with care is on income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance.

Throughput

By 31 March 2007, the agency will clear 55 per cent. of new applications within 12 weeks of receipt and 80 per cent. in 26 weeks.

New application backlogs

By 31 March 2007, the agency will have reduced the volume of uncleared new scheme applications by 25 per cent. of the amount outstanding by the end of March 2006.

Accuracy

By 31 March, 2007, accuracy on the last decision made for all new or old scheme maintenance calculations carried out and checked in previous 12 months to be correct to the nearest penny in at least 87 per cent. of cases.

Debt

The agency will collect arrears equivalent to 40 per cent. of the amount accruing due to non payment of regular maintenance between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007.

Disability and Carers Service

Ensure that for the period 1 April 2006 to 30 September 2006 at least 90 per cent. of calls to the DLA/AA helpline, our national telephone service, are answered first time and from 1 October 2006 ensure that at least 92 per cent. of calls are answered first time.

Ensure that less than 1 per cent. of all calls attempted to the DLA/AA helpline receive an engaged tone/ automated message.

Increase the percentage of customers satisfied with the service provided by Disability and Carers Service to 85 per cent., an increase of 2 per cent. above the 2005 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Clear new claims for disability living allowance within an average of 39 working days, new claims for attendance allowance within an average of 19 days and carer's allowance within an average of 15 working days.

Achieve an accuracy rate of 90 per cent. on decisions on claims for disability living allowance and 92 per cent. for attendance allowance.

Achieve a financial accuracy rate of 98 per cent. on carer's allowance payments.

Reduce sick absence to 8 average working days lost;

Meet the efficiency challenge by delivering a staffing level of 6,038.

Reduce the cost of processing benefits to:

AA/DLA claims	£164.92
AA/DLA live load	£8.64
CA claims	£97.93

CA live load £8.69

The Rent Service

Service Delivery

Speed of Processing

Type of Determination	*Timescale for the Year*	*2006–07 Target Outturn*
housing benefit:		
With an inspection	within 15 working days	94 per cent.
Without an inspection	within 3 working days	94 per cent.
Pre-Tenancy	within 4 working days	94 per cent.
Redetermination	within 15 working days	94 per cent.
Fair Rents	within 40 working days	94 per cent.

Quality

95 per cent. of Local Reference Rent (LRR) Housing Benefit determinations to be upheld on redetermination.

95 per cent. of all Fair Rent valuations that are checked as part of our quality assurance processes are verified as being accurate.

Customer Satisfaction

Local Authority Housing Benefit Department Customers

Our target is to ensure that at least 95 per cent. of our local authority customers rate our service as satisfactory or better during 2005–06.

Fair Rent Customers & Housing Benefit Inspections

Our target is to ensure that at least 95 per cent. of our fair rent customers, and those housing benefit claimants whose properties we inspect, rate our service as satisfactory or better during the year.

Productivity

To increase productivity by 7 per cent. by the end of the year.

Cost per case

To reduce cost per case by 6 per cent. in real terms by the end of the year.

Social Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): I am pleased to announce that the gross discretionary social fund budget for 2006–07 will be £842 million.

This includes an increase in net treasury funding of £120 million. The increase is the first of three annual increases which in total comprise a substantial £210 million boost to support changes to the discretionary loans scheme announced in pre-Budget reports of 2004 and 2005.

With the investment of the extra net funding of £120 million, I have been able to allocate a gross national loans budget of £700 million from 1 April 2006.

I have also decided to increase the national community care grant budget by £3 million to £141 million. This is the seventh consecutive annual increase and means that the national community care grant budget is now almost 44 per cent. higher than in 1999–2000. £1 million will be retained centrally as a contingency reserve. For example to provide additional help to districts facing unexpected and unplanned expenditure.

Details of individual district budget allocations will be placed in the Library.

The discretionary social fund budget is cash limited. Budgets are allocated to districts on 1 April each year.

The gross discretionary SF budget allocated for 2006–07 is £842 million made up of:

New money (AME) £298.2 million

Forecast loan recovery £543.8 million

This was allocated as follows:

Loans	£700 million
Grants	£141 million
Contingency reserve	£1 million

If the forecast for loan recoveries proves to be an underestimate, any additional recoveries can be allocated to districts during the year.

The contingency reserve is held centrally and allocations made from it reimburse districts for expenditure resulting from a local accident or disaster—for example, floods.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 20 March 2006

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Air Quality

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 258W, on air quality, what progress has been made towards bringing the standard of air quality in the Stockport part of Denton and Reddish constituency to within the guideline limits. [58417]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the current, and likely future, air quality in their areas. Where local authorities consider that one or more of the nationally prescribed air quality objectives for each of the seven pollutants is unlikely to be met by the relevant deadline, they must declare an air quality management area (AQMA), covering the area where the problem is expected. These local authorities must then take action, along with other agencies and organisations, to work towards meeting the air quality objectives.

Stockport MBC initially declared AQMAs for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particles (PM_{10}) in December 2001. It was subsequently predicted that the national objective for particles would not in fact be exceeded in Stockport. A new AQMA declaration in July 2005 replaced the 2001 declaration, and relates to nitrogen dioxide only. The AQMA covers single roads and groups of roads and areas close to them across the borough, including some in the north of the borough, in the Denton and Reddish constituency. Stockport MBC, in conjunction with the other Greater Manchester local authorities, produced a joint air quality action plan (linked with the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan) which was publicly consulted upon in June 2004; my Department also commented on the plan. The action plan includes a range of both Greater Manchester-wide and borough-specific measures. Stockport are now engaged in implementing measures to work towards meeting the air quality objectives. The measures are aimed at traffic reduction and modal shift from cars to other forms of transport and include park and ride/walk schemes, green travel plans, and quality bus corridors. In the most recent Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report (2005), Stockport MBC reported that they were on schedule in implementing the majority of their borough-specific measures.

Greater Manchester authorities are now working closely with transport planners in finalising the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is due by the end of March 2006. Including measures within the LTP should also help increase the capacity to deliver cleaner air within the AQMAs.

The Government are also currently undertaking a review of the air quality strategy to identify potential new additional measures to move us closer to meeting the air quality objectives and generate cost-effective health benefits.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 258–9W, on air quality, what recent assessment has been made of air quality standards in the Stockport part of Denton and Reddish constituency. [57819]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the current, and likely future, air quality in their areas. Guidance on reviews and assessments are available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lagm/guidance/index.htm and http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airguality/lagm/guidance/pdf/lagm-tg03.pdf.

Stockport MBC submitted their last Updating and Screening Assessment in November 2003. Stockport subsequently carried out a Detailed Assessment in respect of nitrogen dioxide and particles (PM_{10}), which was submitted to my Department in December 2004, and they submitted a Progress Report in May 2005. In light of the conclusions of the Detailed Assessment, Stockport amended their AQMA declaration in July 2005. The AQMA was enlarged with respect to nitrogen dioxide, but the particles objective was removed from the declaration. The AQMA covers single roads and groups of roads and areas close to them across the borough, including some in the north of the borough, within the Denton and Reddish constituency. As part of their review and assessment work, Stockport MBC continue to monitor nitrogen dioxide at roadside locations in the north of the borough.

The next round of review and assessments has now started and local authorities are asked to submit a new Updating and Screening Assessment by end of April 2006. Copies of all the review and assessment reports are available from the following contact at Stockport MBC stephen.brown@stockport.gov.uk or air.group@stockport.gov.uk.

Anti-social Behaviour Act

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions powers introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 have been used to deal with environmental crime. [57055]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following figures are available on the use of new powers introduced under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 for tackling enviro-crime:

Sections 40–41 introduced the power for local authorities to shut noisy premises for up to 24 hours in order to address or prevent a public nuisance. We do not have information on how many times this power has been used.

Section 42 removed the requirement for local authorities to adopt the Noise Act 1996 and provide a specific level of noise service before the Noise Act 1996 could be used. In 2004–05, one fixed penalty notice was issued by local authorities in England for night noise offences.

Sections 43–47 introduced new fixed penalty notices for graffiti and flyposting. In 2004–05, 19 fixed penalties were issued by local authorities in England for graffiti offences and 57 for fly-posting.

Sections 48–52 introduced a power for local authorities to issue Graffiti Removal Notices requiring the clean-up of property defaced by graffiti; however, these powers have so far been available only in 12 pilot areas and the Government are not aware of any notices having been issued. This is largely due to the establishment of partnership arrangements in these areas for dealing with graffiti defacement.

Section 54 made it an offence to sell aerosol paints to under 16-year-olds. No records of prosecutions under s.54 of the Act were notified for 2003 and 2004. Statistics for 2005 will be published in the autumn.

Section 55 extended certain enforcement powers to local authorities for use when investigating fly-tipping offences. No national data are collected on how frequently these powers are used as this is a matter for local authorities based on local enforcement policies. There is anecdotal evidence, however, that local authorities have been using these powers, particularly the stop and search powers, and that they have been extremely helpful to them when dealing with fly-tipping offences.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to protect bird populations in zoos and aviaries from avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [59413]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has issued extensive guidance to all bird keepers, including specific guidance for zoos, on the biosecurity measures that will protect their birds from avian influenza.

We have also planned for a possible preventive vaccination programme against avian influenza for zoo birds in the UK, for conservation purposes. This will be based on a veterinary risk assessment. As part of our planning, we have ordered 2.3 million doses of vaccine as a contingency reserve for zoo birds.

However, at the present level of risk, currently available vaccines do not make vaccination effective or efficient. A high standard of biosecurity, separation from wild birds and careful surveillance for signs of disease are the most effective means of prevention.

Badger Cull

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate has been made of the annual cost of *(a)* purchase of equipment, *(b)* transport, *(c)* staff training, *(d)* employment and salary and *(e)* other costs in relation to carrying out a large-scale badger cull in England. [57383]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are currently analysing the responses to a public consultation on both the principle and method of introducing a badger culling policy. No decisions have yet been made. A partial regulatory impact assessment was published alongside the consultation document and is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/badgers-tbcontrols/partial-ria.pdf.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the effects of culling badgers on reducing bovine tuberculosis in cattle; and if she will make a statement. [57591]

Mr. Bradshaw: Recent research from the randomised badger culling trial (RBCT), together with the results from the Republic of Ireland's four area badger culling trial and other scientific evidence, has shown that culling badgers in hotspot areas can help reduce the incidence of disease in cattle. However, there is still enough scientific uncertainty—in particular about the potential risk of increasing bovine TB in herds surroundingareas in which badgers have been culled and different culling strategies—to make it important to consult on the principle as well as the method of badger controls.

A public consultation on both the principle and method of a badger culling policy in areas of high TB incidence in cattle was launched on 15 December 2005. The deadline has now passed and we are currently considering the responses received.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost of culling badgers in each of the *(a)* last five years and *(b)* next three years; and if she will make a statement. [57605]

Mr. Bradshaw: The randomised badger culling trial (RBCT) began in 1998 and the culling element of the trial ended in October 2005, with some surveying work continuing. The costs shown in the table include the field trial, analysis and audit elements of the trial.

	£ millions
2000–01	6.6
2001–02	6.0
2002–03	6.6
2003–04	7.3
2004–05	7.2

We are currently analysing the responses to a public consultation on both the principle and method of introducing a badger culling policy. No decisions have yet been made. A partial regulatory impact assessment was published alongside the consultation document and is available on the DEFRA website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/badgers-tbcontrols/partial-ria.pdf.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to charge farmers for culling badgers on their property; and if she will make a statement. [57606]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have recently concluded a public consultation on both the principle and method of a badger culling policy to control the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle in high incidence areas in England. We are in the process of analysing responses. No decisions have yet been made.

Bovine TB

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice her Department offers to farmers on protecting their herds from bovine tuberculosis; and if she will make a statement. [57592]

Mr. Bradshaw: Advice to farmers on protecting their herds from bovine tuberculosis is available on the DEFRA website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/abouttb/index.htm#protect.

In addition, every cattle owner in Great Britain has received 'TB in cattle—reducing the risk pre- and post movement testing in GB'. This booklet encourages herd owners to promote high standards of disease prevention and control through farm health planning. It also strongly advises herd owners to discuss the benefits of herd health planning with their local veterinary inspector or veterinary practitioner.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the European Union directives on controlling bovine tuberculosis in cattle; how

Mr. Bradshaw: European controls for bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in cattle are set out in Council Directive 64/432/EEC.

In England, European controls have been introduced under provisions laid down in the The Tuberculosis (England and Wales) Order 1984 together with the Animal Health Act 1981 (Section 32); and The Animals and Animal Product (Import and Export) (England) Regulations 2005. More detailed information is available on the DEFRA website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/abouttb/legis.htm

The Government recognises the difficult and challenging problem of bTB. We therefore regularly review bTB controls to ensure they robustly protect public and animal health and consider whether they comply with requirements set out in European legislation.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the occasions when she has raised bovine tuberculosis in cattle with the European Union in each year since 1997; and what the outcome was in each case. [57633]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has held discussions at various levels with the European Union on this subject.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has undertaken on the incidence of bovine tuberculosis on individual farms; and if she will make a statement. [57647]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has funded a variety of projects which investigate aspects of tuberculosis risk to farms generally. Specific projects have looked at risk factors affecting tuberculosis incidence in cattle herds, the effects of re-stocking following whole herd slaughter (post foot and mouth disease) and the risks posed by badgers visiting farm buildings and feed stores. In addition, the Department has carried out two questionnaire based epidemiological studies (TB99 and CCS2005), on behalf of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle Tuberculosis, to identify factors that might influence outbreaks.

More information on Defra commissioned research is available on the Defra website at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/research.

A paper on the initial analysis of TB99 data was published in Biology Letters, 2005, Issue 1, pp 53–56.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment her Department has made of the link between badgers and bovine tuberculosis in cattle; and if she will make a statement. [57648]

Mr. Bradshaw: The evidence for a link between badgers and bovine tuberculosis in cattle was reviewed in 1997 by the Independent Scientific Review Group, led by Professor John Krebs. The Krebs group concluded that

> 'the sum of evidence strongly supports the view that, in Britain, badgers were a significant source of infection in cattle'.

More recently, experts[1] have demonstrated that badgers are a maintenance host for bovine tuberculosis. Although existing research does not quantify the specific contribution made by badgers to the appearance of bovine tuberculosis in cattle, patterns of infection in cattle and badgers are closely linked.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what work she has commissioned on the impact of hedgerows in reducing the level of bovine tuberculosis. [58375]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department commissioned Oxford University, in 1999, to undertake a large project looking at the risk to cattle from "M. bovis" infection in wildlife species other than badgers. One output from this was the recent publication which suggested that habitat management appeared to be important for a farm's TB risks. For example, the existence of ungrazed wildlife strips and the greater availability, width and continuity of hedgerows seemed to be associated with a reduced TB risk.

Footpaths

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to enable farmers to move footpaths which are adversely affecting farming. [58158]

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[1] Donnelly, C.A. , Woodroffe, R., Cox, D.R., Bourne, F.J., Cheeseman, C.L., Clifton-Hadley, R.S., Wei, G., Gettinby, G., Gilks, P., Jenkins, H., Johnston, W.T., Le Ferve, A.M., McInerney, J.P. & Morrison, W.I. (2005) Positive and negative effects of widespread badger culling on cattle tuberculosis. *Nature*, doi.10.1038/nature04454 (http://www.doi.org/).

Mr. Bradshaw: Farmers are already able to apply for permanent footpath or bridleway diversion orders under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, provided relevant criteria that balance the interests of the owner and the public are met.

National Farmers Union Conference

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what basis she stated at the recent National Farmers Union conference that the Prime Minister is the Minister for Biosecurity. [59400]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Secretary of State's speech at the recent National Farmers Union conference did not say that the Prime Minister is the Minister for Biosecurity.

Noise Act

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which local authorities have not adopted the terms of the Noise Act 1996 in relation to night-time noise. [57750]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Noise Act 1996 was amended by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 to remove the requirement of adoption. All local authorities can use the powers in the Noise Act 1996 to deal with night-time noise.

Travelling Circuses

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 3 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1018W, on travelling circuses, whether any of the research projects evaluated by her Department included scientific evidence on forms of entertainment involving *(a)* poor welfare, *(b)* suffering and *(c)* cruelty to animals; and if she will make a statement. [59062]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is not aware of any research that indicates welfare problems relating to the actual performance aspect of using animals in entertainment. Most research focuses on whether there might be welfare issues relating to husbandry aspects such as housing.

Water

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to increase water provision in East Sussex in the next 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [58995]

Mr. Morley: The Department has no plans to increase water supplies in East Sussex. It is for the individual water companies concerned to consider the need for increasing provision of water in fulfilment of their duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. The companies' plans for meeting demand were set out in their 25 year water resources plans, prepared in 2004. The Environment Agency reported on those plans in 'Maintaining Water Supply', which is available from its website.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing Countries (Women and Girls)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of progress towards improving the status of women and girls in developing countries; and what steps are being taken by his Department to support such progress. [58825]

Mr. Thomas: DFID recognises that no serious strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can fail to address gender equality and women's empowerment as a central concern. We are committed to full implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action, and DFID participated in the review of progress on implementation of Beijing commitments which took place at the UN's 'Beijing plus 10' conference last spring. This meeting noted that progress had been made in improving the status of women and girls since the original conference in 1995 but that this progress had not been even across all areas and regions, and that considerable challenges remained. The conference called for strengthened efforts to implement the Beijing platform for action including critical areas such as health, education, tackling gender-based violence, economic empowerment and decision-making. The meeting also underlined the linkages between implementation of the Beijing commitments and achievement of the MDGs. These messages were reiterated by UN heads of state at the Millennium Review Summit in September.

As well as support to international processes, DFID is working to ensure that gender issues are made a priority area across our programme and that developing country partners integrate gender into their own national plans. DFID also supports specific activities to promote the rights of women and girls, including in the areas of girls' education, maternal mortality and reproductive health.

Government Accountability

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 786–7W, on government accountability, how much his Department *(a)* has spent on each of the last three years and *(b)* expects to spend in 2005–06 on support for African parliaments; how much in total his Department expects to spend on each of the projects and initiatives referred to in the answer; what the objectives are of each such project and initiative; what progress has been made on each; and which partner organisations are involved with each. [54238]

Hilary Benn: DFID has spent £1.21 million in 2003–04, £1.6 million in 2004–05 and expects to spend £1.41 million in 2005–06 in support of African parliaments. A breakdown of these figures by programmes referred to in the answer of 6 February is set out in the following table, along with a description of the objectives, progress and donor partners involved in each.

In addition, in its policy discussions with developing country partners, DFID promotes greater transparency and accountability and encourages the involvement of local parliamentarians, civil society and the media in the development and review of poverty reduction plans and domestic budgeting processes.

DFID spend towards projects supporting African parliaments (2003–04 to 2005–06)

	Spend (£) 2003–04	*Spend (£) 2004–05*	*Expected Spend (£) 2005–06*	*Objectives of project/ initiative*	*What progress has been made on each*	*Donor partners*
The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB)			12,500	To strengthen parliaments and parliamentarians in West and Southern Africa	This programme has just begun. It will enhance the capacity of parliamentarians to carry out their legislative and representative roles in West and Southern Africa, and to hold government's to account.	World Bank International Monetary Fund
Kenya Work with Parliamentary committees including library services			9,537	To enhance the effectiveness of parliament and parliamentary committees through the provision of information, research and legal services.	Technical assistance has been provided and capacity building workshops held for the Parliament Service Commission to draw up an information strategy. A tender for the design and development of modern library and information services has been issued.	European Commission
Malawi Support to parliament and civil society relations	920,494	1.108m	505,000	Support for the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to strengthen Parliamentary committees (2001–04), and to enhance civil society's involvement in parliamentary processes	Parliamentary Committees are working more effectively Parliamentary candidates debated issues in their constituencies for the first time on a common platform Civil Society Organisations and Parliament have worked together to monitor the government's budget The Malawi Federation for Disabilities influenced the government to pass Malawi's first Disability policy following NDI sponsored advocacy training.	USAID, Canadian development agency, United Nations Development Programme
				Tikambirane (2003–08): A programme to strengthen Parliament's ability to act independently from the Executive in fulfilling its representative, legislative and oversight function	Through the Tikambirane programme training has been provided to elections monitors, party candidates, and to help parties develop campaigning strategies The programme has involved young people in politics, monitored political bias in the media and provided logistical and IT support to the Electoral Commission, and for the publication of the electoral roll.	
Nigeria Work with USAID and National Democratic Institute to support the National Assembly			500,000	To develop the National Assembly's ability to support pro-poor reform	The first work-plan is currently under development and includes: support to Committees working on Millennium Development Goal areas, building the Assembly's capacity to support Nigeria's poverty reduction strategy, and linking reformers within the Assembly and civil society.	USAID, World Bank,
Tanzania Work with USAID and National Democratic Institute to strengthen parliamentary committees	250,000	350,000	[1]250,000	To help strengthen Parliament's capacity to carry out its oversight, lawmaking and representative roles. To support the administration in Parliament.	Finance and Economic Affairs Committees, Parliamentary Accounts Committees and Local Authority Accounts Committee have increased activities and visibility. Relationships between parliament and civil society organisations have improved. This has helped to strengthen representation and information dissemination in Parliament.	USAID
Sierra Leone Work with USAID and National Democratic Institute to strengthen parliamentary committees		119,575		To help strengthen the Parliamentary Committees to play an effective oversight and leadership role in budget and legislative scrutiny and law-making.	A workplan to address weaknesses in parliamentary policies and processes was developed in the second half of 2004. Consultation on the work plan continued in 2005, but the programme has stalled and is likely to be closed early, in 2006—rather than 2007. Given that there will be elections in 2007 the pre-election period will be used to design a new initiative in support of Parliament.	USAID
Ethiopia Developing capacity building programmes for parliaments			21,350	To build the capacity of federal and regional parliaments	Using lessons-learned from previous parliamentary support programmes,, DFID and other donors are designing a capacity building programme to be financed from a joint donor fund. In the interim, DFID has provided the House of Peoples' Representatives with technical	Multi-donor including: USAID, Netherlands, Canadian Development Agency, Denmark and Finland

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DFID spend towards projects supporting African parliaments (2003–04 to 2005–06)

	Spend (£) 2003–04	*Spend (£) 2004–05*	*Expected Spend (£) 2005–06*	*Objectives of project/ initiative*	*What progress has been made on each*	*Donor partners*
					expertise on parliamentary rules of procedure	
Uganda						
Developing capacity building programmes for parliaments	42,228	31,229	50,000	To support the restructuring of the Parliamentary Service so that it can serve MPS more effectively; To support development of a Strategic Investment Plan, supporting activities with Parliament to deepen democracy and accountability. To establish a joint donor basket fund to enhance Parliament's ownership and reduce transaction costs.	Progress has been made in implementing recommended restructuring. Investment. plan finalised and now used as a basis for co-ordination of partner support around priorities identified by Parliament. Basket fund established. Recent focus has been on supporting activities to prepare Parliamentary Service for Uganda's first multi-party Parliament in over two decades.	USAID, European Commission, UNDP, Sweden and Norway.
Zambia						
Developing capacity building programmes for Parliament under the Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Programme(PEMFA)			[2]55,000	To develop the capacity of Parliament to oversee public resources management to promote democratic governance, transparency and accountability	The programme has strengthened the capacity of Public Accounts Committees and Estimates Committees through: training on public financial management and study tours to other Parliaments; attachment of senior staff to Parliaments in the Region and attendance of a Regional Parliamentary Workshop.	Denmark, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, World Bank

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[1] Funds provided through USAID in tranches

[2] Financing of the PEMFA programme is through a multi-donor pooled funding arrangement. DFID's contribution of £55,000 is 35 per cent. of the total donor funding

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52826]

Hilary Benn: DFID has an efficiency target of £420 million as set out in the 2004 Spending Review. Of this target, £30 million is to be cashable. £20 million of these cashable savings will come from administration costs efficiencies, and will be transferred to the programme to provide direct development benefits. The remaining £10 million will be achieved through procurement efficiencies, and will therefore increase the availability of programme funds.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's Civil Service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52845]

Hilary Benn: The target level of employment in DFID by April 2008, as full-time equivalents and as set out in the 2004 Spending Review, is 1,610 UK-based staff and 950 Staff Appointed In Country.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52864]

Hilary Benn: DFID'S efficiency programme began in April 2005, so no efficiency savings were recorded in 2004–05. By the end of December 2005, DFID has achieved £41.1 mil[illegible] of efficiency gains.

TRANSPORT

Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the commitments set out in the letter of the Minister of State of 8 February 2006 (Ref SL/001336/06) in relation to the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority and the complaints of the chairman of the Riparian and Mooring Rights Owners Group will be met; and if he will make a statement. [59668]

Dr. Ladyman: In my letter of 8 February I undertook to keep the hon. Member informed of progress. We are now treating this case as a priority and I will provide the hon. Member and his constituent with a substantive reply as soon as possible.

Great Western Franchise

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* rail routes will be cut and *(b)* stations will be closed as a consequence of the Government's detailed specification for the Great Western franchise. [59682]

Derek Twigg: None.

M62

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason roadworks are taking place on the M62 on the westbound carriageway east of junction 37; why such work was not carried out when this stretch of the motorway was recently resurfaced; and if he will make a statement. [59428]

Dr. Ladyman: The roadworks on the westbound carriageway east of junction 37 of the M62 are to install an electronic signing system that will alert road users to high winds affecting vehicles on the Ouse Bridge and divert such vehicles off the motorway. The scheme includes an anemometer to monitor wind speeds and update the settings of the diversion signs.

The current scheme was not commissioned until January 2006 and the resurfacing scheme was completed in August/September 2005. As the resurfacing scheme was to the west of junction 38 and the current scheme is to the east of junction 37, they could not be completed at the same time.

Railway Stations

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will provide assistance to West Lancashire council to pilot partnership approaches to improve security at and around stations; [58436]

(2) what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that *(a)* train operating companies and *(b)* British Transport Police improve security at stations in West Lancashire. [58437]

Derek Twigg: The Department continues to work with Network Rail, train operators, the British Transport Police, the Office of Rail Regulation and local authorities, including West Lancashire council, to reduce crime of all kinds as well as the fear of crime wherever it occurs on the transport network.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to increase the number of *(a)* waiting rooms, *(b)* toilet facilities and *(c)* commercial business activities at railway stations; and if he will make a statement. [59430]

Derek Twigg: Railway stations are owned by Network Rail and managed by Network Rail or Train Operators. It is for these parties to plan the facilities at stations, in consultation with stakeholders. The Department continues to work with the ORR, Network Rail, Train Operators, Passenger Focus and other industry stakeholders to streamline industry processes and encourage third party investment.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Conservation Officers

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what resources have been made available to local authorities for conservation officers; and what percentage of local authorities now employ a full-time conservation officer. [59976]

Mr. Lammy: Government support for historic building conservation is funded via the Revenue Support Grant Settlement. Revenue Support Grant is an unhypothecated block grant. This means that authorities are able to spend the grant on any service. It is not therefore possible to say how much grant an authority received for a particular service.

Research commissioned by English Heritage and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation in 2003 indicated that 85 per cent. of local authorities could draw on in-house conservation expertise, with an average of 1.7 full time equivalent specialists per authority. This research is being updated in 2006.

Digital Television

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the Public Service Broadcast requirement for additional capacity on digital terrestrial for high definition television; who will pay for the additional capacity; and what estimate she has made of the cost of providing the additional capacity. [59984]

James Purnell: I have made no such assessment. The award, management and pricing of spectrum are primarily matters for OFCOM. They have announced in their annual plan that they will consult later this year on the application of spectrum pricing to broadcasting spectrum, and are currently undertaking a "digital dividend review" to understand how to ensure optimal use of the spectrum released by switchover.

Gambling

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what methods she will use to assess the proposed regional casino pilot scheme. [59975]

Mr. Caborn: We will ask the Gambling Commission to advise on whether the introduction of the new types of casino permitted by the Gambling Act 2005, including the one regional casino, has led to an increase in problem gambling or is increasing that risk. We will also assess what the regeneration and other economic outcomes have been.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the timetable will be for the assessment of the casinos pilot scheme under the Gambling Act 2005. [60063]

Mr. Caborn: Our intention is to ask the Gambling Commission to make an assessment of the impact of the introduction of the new casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005 no earlier than three years after the award of the first premises licence.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications for new casinos have been submitted under the Gambling Act 1968 *(a)* since 1997 and *(b)* between (i) May 2005 and (ii) November 2005 and the latest date for which figures are available; and how many applications there have been for planning alterations to existing casinos in each period. [59335]

Mr. Caborn: The Gambling Commission (previously the Gaming Board for Great Britain) considers applications for certificates of consent for casinos under the Gaming Act 1968. Once a certificate of consent is issued, operators can then apply to the licensing justices for a licence. The tables set out the number of applications for certificates of consent in respect of new casinos that were received during the periods requested.

Operators also apply for a certificate of consent when they wish to relocate, extend or significantly alter an existing casino. These applications are also included in the tables.

	New casinos	*Substitute/ extended/ altered premises*
1997–98	2	9
1998–99	8	5
1999–00	8	8
2000–01	7	6
2001–02	5	3
2002–03	10	5
2003–04	12	3
2004–05	25	4
2005–06 (to end February 06)	47	8

	New casinos	*Substitute/ extended/altered premises*
April 2005	1	1
May 2005	6	1
June 2005	13	0
July 2005	11	1
August 2005	4	1
September 2005	4	1
October 2005	0	0
November 2005	3	1
December 2005	1	0
January 2006	2	1
February 2006	2	1

Government Art Collection

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pieces of artwork have gone missing from the Government art collection in each of the last seven years. [59188]

Mr. Lammy: The following figures represent the numbers of works of art that have gone missing during the last seven financial years that have not yet been found.

	Number
2005–06	2
2004–05	3
2003–04	4
2002–03	11
2001–02	19
2000–01	7
1999–2000	2

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pieces of artwork are in the Government art collection; and how many are recorded as missing. [59189]

Mr. Lammy: There are currently about 13,200 works included in the Government art collection.

The first extant records of the collection date from 1898. Because of the uncertainty surrounding many of the old manual records no exact figure can be given for the number of missing works. Currently 636 are listed as missing. These are mostly prints of relatively low value. Analysis of the records of missing works indicate that most of the losses occurred before the early 1990s. A large proportion of these were reported as missing in the late 1980s as a result of improvements in recording. It is likely that most of these losses had happened many years earlier but had not been reported at the time. The completion of a decade-long period of computerisation of records and employment of a professional museum register in1991 has led to a radical improvement in inventory control and resultant reduction in missing works. Far fewer works go missing now—within the last year there were two.

Licensing

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much charities have paid for entertainment licenses for fund-raising events since the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. [59333]

James Purnell: The information is not held centrally.

School Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much lottery funding has been provided for school sport in each year since 2000. [59676]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Sport England, Sport Scotland, Sports Council Wales, Sports Council for Northern Ireland and the New Opportunities Fund have awarded lottery funding for school sport since 2000. The figures for 2005–06 use the latest figures available.

£

	Amount
2000–01	17,659,107
2001–02	28,547,582
2002–03	106,541,897
2003–04	220,016,586
2004–05	353,719,455
2005–06	90,045,587

The contribution from Sport England and Sports Council Wales is the average amount awarded from each year from 2000–01 to 2005–06.

Sport Scotland and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland have awarded the following amounts to projects that significantly benefited school sport in each year:

£

	Amount
2000–01	8,391,391
2001–02	6,826,836
2002–03	4,252,679
2003–04	2,733,608
2004–05	4,162,831
2005–06	823,500

Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 26 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2296–97W, on sports programmes, what progress has been made on finalising the details of the *(a)* governance arrangements, *(b)* staffing, *(c)* location and *(d)* role of the regional sports boards as they affect the National Sports Foundation due to be launched in April. [59665]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* I am pleased to say that the National Sports Foundation will become operational in April 2006, as announced in the Chancellor's latest pre-Budget report.

The foundation will have its own separate and unique identity, reflecting the innovative approach that it will take to securing extra investment in grass roots sport. In order that it should be operated as efficiently as possible, and to minimise administrative costs, I have decided that the foundation will use as much of Sport England's existing infrastructure as possible, including staffing, premises and their regional network. The Regional Sports Boards will play a key role in this delivery framework both in helping to identify new sources of funding and in ensuring that funding decisions match our strategic priorities for increasing participation in sport and physical activity.

My officials are working closely with Sport England to ensure that a robust governance structure will have been agreed upon prior to next month's launch. Key to these considerations is ensuring that we maximise the levels of new investment in grass roots and community sport.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how local authorities are assessed on their provision of sports facilities. [59662]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Provision for sport and leisure is currently a discretionary service for local authorities.

Decisions on such provision are therefore a matter for local government.

However, access to good quality sports facilities is essential if we are to encourage people to lead healthier, more active lives and local authority performance is measured in a number of ways, including the towards an excellent service self assessment tool and the QUEST accreditation scheme, both developed by Sport England. Local authorities are also obliged to conduct a triennial user satisfaction survey, which includes a question about user satisfaction with sports facilities.

Moreover, local authority performance in sports provision will be monitored through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) 2006. The cultural services assessment in CPA will identify excellence in the delivery of sports provision, as well as where improvement is needed.

Television Licence

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in Tamworth have been prosecuted for not having a television licence in each of the last five years. [27497]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to identify those prosecutions in Tamworth as the data are not collected at this level of detail.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces (MRSA)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces have contracted MRSA in each of the last three years; where the infection is believed to have been contracted in each case; and what the cause is believed to have been in each case. [59066]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence does not collate information on how many Service personnel have contracted MRSA. Furthermore, MRSA is not a statutorily notifiable disease, and therefore not all cases of MRSA among Service personnel will necessarily be known about by the Defence Medical Services.

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1398W to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone).

Armed Forces Pay Review Body

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if (1) he will place in the Library a transcript of his oral evidence to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in the course of the preparation of its 35th report; [55477]

(2) he will place in the Library the transcripts of oral evidence given to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body by the *(a)* Chief of Defence Staff, *(b)* Permanent Under-Secretary, *(c)* principal personnel officers, *(d)* Director of Reserve Forces and Cadets and *(e)* Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets). [55902]

John Reid: The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) is an independent body. It calls for evidence from Defence Ministers and officials which is given in private. No formal transcript is made, but the AFPRB reflects the evidence provided as necessary in its report—a copy of which is placed in the Library of the House.

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to ratify the protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) before the CCW review conference in November 2006. [58610]

John Reid *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The United Kingdom has ratified the first four Protocols of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We are committed to ratification of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War and aim to do so at the earliest opportunity.

Defence Export Services Organisation

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what meetings have been held in 2006 between the Defence Export Services Organisation and *(a)* members of the armed forces and *(b)* defence ministry officials from (i) Iraq, (ii) Libya and (iii) Pakistan; and if he will make a statement. [59546]

Mr. Ingram: Officials from the Defence Export Services Organisation routinely hold meetings with representatives of foreign governments. In respect of Libya, there have been three such meetings this year. In the case of Pakistan there have been six, three of which were with the Pakistani Defence Adviser in London. The meetings have taken place within the context of the Government's policy of engagement with those countries concerned, with the aim of promoting cooperation and identifying opportunities for UK industry to assist in meeting legitimate defence and security requirements. There have been no meetings with Iraqi officials so far this year.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what meetings have taken place between the Defence Export Services Organisations and the organisers of Pakistan's International Defence Exhibition and Seminar 2006; and if he will make a statement. [59549]

Mr. Ingram: Defence Export Services Organisation officials have met with organisers of the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar on two occasions. Such meetings are in accordance with the Government's policy of defence equipment cooperation with the Pakistani Government and industry.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his department and (ii) agencies which report to him. [56535]

Mr. Touhig: The use of 0800, 0845 or 0870 telephone numbers in the Ministry of Defence and its agencies is determined at local level in accordance with individual business requirements, and ordered directly from the supplier. Records of these numbers are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Deployment

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers were deployed in Stockwell on 22 July 2005; and if he will make a statement. [57746]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* Events in Stockwell on 22 July 2005 are currently under investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. I am therefore unable to make any comment.

Service Accommodation (Falkland Islands)

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Service Family Accommodation properties in the Falkland Islands are of Grade *(a)* one, *(b)* two, *(c)* three and *(d)* four standard. [57489]

Mr. Touhig: There are 59 Service Family Accommodation properties on the Falkland Islands. The standard of condition of the properties is grade one for 23 of them, and grade two for the remaining 36; there are no grade three or four properties.

Health Specialisation

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* staff numbers in post are of each specialisation of allied health professionals in each of the services. [58308]

Mr. Touhig: The table shows the established and actual numbers of Allied Health Professionals in post, classified by specialisation. In light of current operational planning assumptions, the tri-Service manning requirement for the Defence Medical Services (DMS) is currently under review. As a result, the total DMS requirement figures are expected to decrease in the near future.

Post	*Established Posts*	*Number in Post*
Biomedical Scientist	73	60
Clinical Physiologist	11	7
Combat Medical Technician (Army)	2,030	1,620
Dental Hygienists	74	69
Dental Surgery Support	410	390
Dental Technicians	40	42
Environmental Health Officer	29	29
Environmental Health Technicians	110	100
Health Inspector	[1]—	2
Medical Admin (RAF)	340	330
Medical Assistant (Royal Marine and Commando)	120	66
Medical Assistant (Dental)	[1]—	[1]—
Medical Assistant (General Duties)	380	470
Medical Assistant (RAF)	360	370
Medical Assistant (Submarine)	77	86
Operating Department Practitioners	190	120
Pharmacist	15	10
Pharmacy Technician	77	43
Physiotherapist	98	83
Radiographer	41	33
Single Service Command and Staff	4	[1]—
Tri-Service Command and Staff	1	[1]—
Tri-Service Totals	4,490	3,930

[1] denotes zero.

Notes:

1. Figures over 100 have been rounded to the nearest 10 (although numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias).
2. Figures less than 100 have been left unrounded so as not to obscure the data.
3. Due to the rounding methods used, totals may not equal the sum of the parts.

Source:

Defence Medical Services Department.

Insurgents/Terrorists

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's definition is of *(a)* insurgents and *(b)* terrorists; and whether these definitions could simultaneously apply to the same individuals. [58661]

John Reid *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* In the context of UK military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the term "insurgents" generally refers to those violently opposing government authority and the rule of law in the particular country or countries where they live. "Terrorists" are those connected to a specific, named terrorist organisation which is recognised as such by the UK or by the international community as a whole and who may or may not be engaged in violence against the Government of the country where they live.

It is possible that an individual may choose both to be part of a terrorist group, and to participate in an insurgency. It is recognised that these terms are often used interchangeably in common usage.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a D Notice was issued to restrict reporting of complaints from family of service personnel killed in Iraq that army vehicles had not been fixed with anti-roadside bomb detection and protective devices; and if he will make a statement. [59842]

Mr. Ingram: D Notices were replaced by the Defence Advisory (DA) Notice system in 1993. The DA Notice system is overseen by the Defence Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee (DPBAC), a joint government/media body. The five standing DA Notices approved by the Committee (see www.dnotice.org.uk) provide the media with guidance on the areas of national security that need to be protected; they also provide the basis for prior negotiation in cases of dispute. The DA Notice code is purely voluntary and is not supported by any form of legal sanction. The five standing DA Notices are used by the DPBAC Secretary—who administers the system on a day-to-day basis—to provide further guidance to the media or officials about reporting on specific events or circumstances.

On 3 September 2004 the then DPBAC Secretary wrote a general letter to editors on the subject of protective countermeasures used by British forces in Iraq. In it he acknowledged that it was widely known that the British forces in Iraq were employing various types of countermeasures to protect themselves against the roadside ambush techniques being used by Iraqi insurgents. He went on to advise that the publication or broadcasting of the specific details of these countermeasures would pose a "real and serious danger to life".

This was followed by two other general letters issued by the DPBAC Secretary to editors (respectively 22 August and 6 October 2005) repeating and elaborating the previous advice. All of these letters were written in response to developing concerns by British commanders that the publication or broadcasting of such details risked nullifying British countermeasures and thus increasing the risks faced by members of the British forces, not only in Iraq but also in other theatres.

No DA Notice advice has ever been offered which attempts to restrict the reporting of complaints from families of Service personnel killed in Iraq that British Army vehicles had not been equipped with anti-roadside bomb detection and protective devices.

Prisoners of War

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* prisoners of war or surviving spouses and *(b)* civilian internees or surviving spouses are (i) eligible for payment, (ii) have been paid and (iii) are awaiting payment in relation to the ex-gratia scheme for former Far East prisoners of war and civilian internees. [58964]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* We do not have information on numbers of surviving former prisoners of war, former civilian internees or spouses, or on their personal circumstances that would allow us to assess the numbers eligible for payment under the scheme. The other information on numbers paid or awaiting decisions is set out as follows:

	Paid
Prisoners of War (POW)	8,460
POW surviving spouses	12,495
Civilian Internees (CI)	2,428
CI surviving spouses	599
Cases where category is unclear	93
Total paid	24,075
Cases awaiting decision	162

The position of the 93 cases where the category is unclear could only be clarified by identifying and reviewing each of the claim files affected. This could only be done at disproportionate cost. Decisions under the civilian element of the scheme were suspended last year following a High Court judgement that the criteria for deciding whether a claimant met the nationality criteria had resulted in unlawful indirect discrimination. This judgement is the subject of an appeal by both sides that is due to be heard in the Court of Appeal early next month.

Sustainable Building

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of his Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the 2004–05 financial year. [58750]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence does not allocate separately identifiable funds for energy self-generation or water recycling measures within the building programme budgets. Thus the information required is not held centrally and to give a full answer would incur disproportionate costs.

However, this Department's policy is to strive to maximise its energy supply from renewable sources by exploiting all value for money, through-life renewable energy supply opportunities. A range of appraisal tools and evaluation methodologies have been mandated within the Department to prompt consideration of a wide range of energy and water management measures including self generation and water recycling

The Department is investigating opportunities to increase the number of self-generating renewable technology schemes installed on the defence estate.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army (TA) personnel *(a)* are serving in Iraq and *(b)* have served in Iraq since the start of the conflict, broken down by TA (i) section and (ii) rank. [43693]

Mr. Touhig: There are currently some 660 members of the TA serving in Iraq. Some 9,394 TA personnel have served in Iraq since the start of Operation TELIC. A more detailed breakdown will be placed in the Library of the House.

PRIME MINISTER

No. 10 Downing Street

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list hon. Members who have security clearance for access to No. 10 Downing Street. [59411]

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on security issues.

Dorneywood

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister for what reasons he has re-allocated Dorneywood to the Deputy Prime Minister. [59414]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Chris Huhne) on 13 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Lord Levy

Mr. Soames: To ask the Prime Minister what is the role of Lord Levy in Her Majesty's Government. [59996]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Baker) on 17 March 2006 [59424].

Ministerial Code

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will amend the Ministerial Code to include guidance on the content of speeches given by spouses of Ministers where the speech may be construed as being relevant to Government policy. [59750]

The Prime Minister: The Ministerial Code is revised and reissued after a General Election.

Transparency and Accountability

Mr. Soames: To ask the Prime Minister what steps he has taken to improve transparency and accountability in Government. [59997]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave at my monthly press conference on 16 March 2006, a transcript of which is available on the No. 10 website.

TREASURY

Labour-intensive Services

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will apply for permission to the EU to reduce the rate of VAT levied on labour-intensive services in respect of bicycle repairs; [59860]

(2) pursuant to the ECOFIN agreement in February, what plans he has to apply for permission to reduce the rate of VAT levied on labour-intensive services in respect of district heating. [59861]

Dawn Primarolo: The VAT reduced rate for the repair of bicycles is one of a number introduced into EU legislation on an experimental basis whose objective is to create employment opportunities by stimulating demand through lower prices. The Government have always chosen not to participate, as we believe that our employment objectives are better targeted through measures such as the welfare to work strategy and New Deal, which have contributed to the 2.3 million rise in employment since 1997.

District heating does not form part of the labour intensive services experiment, but the agreement reached at the January ECOFIN meeting does allow member states to apply for this reduced rate. We continue to review whether this reduced rate would offer the best-targeted and most efficient support for our social objectives.

Biofuels

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will revise the statutory definition of biofuels to include biofuels which have not been made using the transesterification process. [59390]

John Healey: Fuel is eligible for the rate of duty for biodiesel (currently 27.10 pence per litre) if it meets the legal definition of biodiesel for tax purposes set out in section 2AA of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979. Conformity with this definition rather than the method of production determines whether a fuel is deemed as a biodiesel for tax purposes.

Birth Statistics (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many births there were to women resident in Lancashire health authority *(a)* in maternity hospitals, *(b)* in midwife-led units, *(c)* at home and *(d)* at other locations in each year since 2000. [59026]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 20 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your request for the number of births to women resident in Lancashire Health Authority *(a)* in maternity hospitals, *(b)* in midwife-led units, *(c)* at home and *(d)* at other locations in each year since 2000. (59026)

For health administration purposes Lancashire falls within the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area and the table below relates to live-births to women usually resident there at the time of the birth. Since information is not available centrally on which hospitals are mid-wife led units, figures are presented for categories *(a)* and *(b)* combined.

Hospitals where more than 30 live births took place in any year over the period 2000 to 2004 have been shown individually; the remaining ones have been aggregated in the 'Other hospitals' sub-total. Births in the 'Elsewhere' category are mainly those occurring on the way to hospital or at a private residence which is not that of the mother.

Live births by place of occurrence for women resident in Cumbria and Lancashire SHA area 2000–04

Place of occurrence	*Year of occurrence* 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
(a) and (b)					
Maternity hospital/unit					
Sharoe Green Hospital	3,578	3,635	3,435	3,680	2,559
Sharoe Green Unit Royal Preston Hospital	0	0	0	0	1,329
Queens Park Hospital	3,539	3,477	3,490	3,666	3,674
Victoria Hospital, Blackpool	2,737	2,604	2,578	2,745	2,930
General Hospital, Burnley	2,083	2,146	2,112	2,214	2,343
Royal Infirmary, Lancaster	1,590	1,651	1,653	1,770	1,879
West Cumberland Hospital	1,220	1,172	1,131	1,212	1,222
Cumberland Infirmary	1,078	1,432	1,458	1,565	1,624
Furness General Hospital	1,014	1,033	918	1,065	1,083
Ormskirk District General Hospital	795	845	848	976	1,055
Helme Chase Maternity Unit	488	403	258	286	286
City Maternity Hospital, Carlisle	431	0	0	0	0
Fairfield General Hospital	333	319	276	289	329
Airedale General Hospital	291	229	229	217	236
Penrith Hospital	191	150	151	137	51
Chorley and District Hospital, Chorley	191	250	207	227	273
Billinge Hospital	109	105	83	96	33
Rochdale Infirmary	0	100	115	88	113
Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital, Southport	109	117	107	45	12
Birch Hill Hospital	97	2	0	0	0
Bolton General Hospital	60	64	64	63	77
St. Marys Hospital, Whitworth Park	54	62	66	36	60
Liverpool Womens Hospital	50	46	48	44	68
Royal Victoria Infirmary	27	16	23	27	35
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan	0	0	0	0	37
Other hospitals[1]	138	132	132	118	110
(c)					
At home	289	270	268	358	396
(d)					
Elsewhere	25	19	26	23	17
Total	20,517	20,279	19,676	20,947	21,831

[1] There were 116 hospitals/units in the 'Other' category where there was at least one birth in the period 2000 to 2004.

Breast Cancer

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of breast cancer have been diagnosed in the last five years, broken down by age band. [59218]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter form Karen Dunnell, dated 20 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people were diagnosed with breast cancer in the last five years, broken down by age band. (59218)

The latest available figures are for the year 2003. The number of people diagnosed with breast cancer, by age band, in each year is available in Table 1 of the Annual Reference Volume, Cancer statistics: Registrations, Series MB1. These are available on the National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 88434&Pos = 4&ColRank = 14&Ran k = 224.

Child Tax Credits

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will bring forward proposals to permit families entitled to Child Tax Credits to have them paid directly into Credit Union accounts. [55182]

Dawn Primarolo: Payment of tax credits can be paid into such accounts.

Council Tax Rebate (Pensioners)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the council tax rebate for people of pensionable age. [57399]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 14 March 2006]*: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 5.66 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 2005.

Data-mining Techniques

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what use *(a)* the Valuation Office Agency and *(b)* HM Revenue and Customs makes of data-mining techniques; and for what purposes. [59176]

Dawn Primarolo: The information as follows:

(a) The Valuation Office Agency makes limited use of data-mining techniques as part of routine statistical analysis. These are restricted to internal financial management only.

(b) HMRC uses data-mining techniques as part of routine statistical analysis of large data sets. By increasing the effectiveness of HMRC's compliance and enforcement activities, this reduces the burden on compliant taxpayers and helps to ensure that people pay the right amount of tax or receive the right amount of benefits.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many jobs were created within Government in each year between 1997 and 2005. [59496]

John Healey: Data on public employment sector employment levels since 1997 can be found in the National Statistics quarterly publication "Public Sector Employment First Release", published on the ONS website. The latest release can be found at the following web address: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pse0106.pdf

Financial Services Authority

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what public satisfaction surveys he has carried out on the performance of the Financial Services Authority. [59635]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The two-year review of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 involved discussion with consumer and industry bodies about the performance of the Financial Services Authority (FSA) which indicated no enthusiasm for major reform of the FSA.

The public may voice their satisfaction about the FSA, and about any aspect of financial services regulation on a continual basis through the web-based Better Regulation portal http://www.betterregulation.gov.uk/ and through the Treasury portal simplification@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform the regulatory regime for financial services; and if he will make a statement. [59642]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The effectiveness of the regulatory regime for financial services was considered by the Treasury's two-year review of Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA), the outcome of which was announced on 2 December 2004 concluded that the framework established by FSMA is a resounding success.

Insurance Premium Tax

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the recharging of insurance premium tax; and if he will make a statement. [58996]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Representations are made to Treasury Ministers and officials on a wide range issues by a variety of organisations in the public and private sectors and by individuals as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As was the case with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all representations and submissions made to the Treasury.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the proportion of those *(a)* earning the minimum wage and *(b)* earning less than £6.50 per hour who are employed in (i) the public sector, (ii) the care sector, (iii) the catering sector, (iv) the hotel sector, (v) cleaning jobs, (vi) farming and (vii) manufacturing industry; and if he will make a statement. [59491]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 20 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the proportion of those *(a)* earning the minimum wage and *(b)* earning less than £6.50 per hour who are employed in (i) the public sector, (ii) the care sector, (iii) the catering sector, (iv) the hotel sector, (v) cleaning jobs, (vi) farming and (vii) manufacturing sector; and if he will make a statement. (59491)

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) does not provide estimates on numbers or proportions of employees with specific levels of earnings. Therefore estimates have not been provided for numbers earning the minimum wage. However, ASHE can estimate proportions of those earning under certain levels. Please find attached tables which give the relevant information for those employees earning less than £6.50 per hour.

Currently average earnings are estimated from the ASHE, and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

2005 hourly earnings excluding overtime (£) pay for all workers jobs[1]

	Percentage of employees earning <£6.50
Public Sector	12.8
Care Sector[2]	34.6
Catering Sector[3]	70.2
Hotels Sector[4]	62.7
Cleaning Sector[5]	75.8
Farming[6]	48.5
Manufacturing[7]	15.0

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.

[2] The care sector has been defined as Group 85.3-social work activities, of the UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2003 (SIC 2003).

[3] The catering sector has been defined as Group 55.3 to 55.5 of SIC 2003.

[4] The hotel sector has been defined as Group 55.1 of SIC 2203.

[5] The cleaning sector has been defined as Group 95.3-elementary cleaning occupations, of the UK Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC 2000).

[6] The farming sector has been defined as Groups 01.1 to 01.4 of SIC 2003.

[7] The manufacturing sector has been defined as Divisions 15 to 37, or Section D, of SIC 2003.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department. [52120]

John Healey: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme— £37 billion

deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion

current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion

Public Sector Jobs

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many public sector jobs have been created since May 1997; and at what estimated cost. [59807]

Mr. Des Browne: Data on public sector employment levels since 1997 can be found in the National Statistics quarterly publication "Public Sector Employment First Release", published on the ONS website. The latest release can be foundat the following web address: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pse0106.pdf.

There are no centrally collated figures measuring the cost of new jobs created in the public sector. Departments total expenditure on pay is recorded in table 3.7 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005, which can be found at the following web address: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/finance_spending_statistics/pes_publications/pespub_pesaOS.cfm. There are no figures, centrally collated or collected by individual Departments, that break down expenditure between new and existing public sector employees.

Suicide

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many suicides there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each of the past five years, broken down by (i) sex and (ii) age. [59471]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 20 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many suicides there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by sex and age. (59471)

The most recent year for which figures are now available is 2004. The table below shows the number of deaths with a verdict of suicide or undetermined intent by sex, age group and country of residence in the United Kingdom for the years 2000 to 2004.

Number of deaths from suicide[1] and injury of undetermined intent[2], by sex, age group, and country of residence of the United Kingdom, 2000 to 2004[3]

	Males				*Females*			
	(a) England	*(b) Wales*	*(c) Scotland*	*(d) Northern Ireland*	*(a) England*	*(b) Wales*	*(c) Scotland*	*(d) Northern Ireland*
Under 15								
2000	15	1	3	—	4	—	5	—
2001	12	1	2	—	11	1	1	1
2002	10	1	3	1	11	1	2	1
2003	18	—	1	1	11	2	—	—
2004	12	—	2	—	8	1	—	—
15–34								
2000	1,226	99	276	78	320	22	64	15
2001	1,157	88	231	66	269	17	72	7
2002	1,086	82	273	71	294	18	62	17
2003	1,030	110	196	43	260	27	66	13
2004	981	81	185	37	280	14	48	15
35–54								
2000	1,420	88	260	42	457	27	87	23
2001	1,388	107	275	48	440	17	102	11
2002	1,403	94	254	55	422	30	87	16
2003	1,406	87	244	48	458	28	93	16
2004	1,437	101	284	50	459	34	115	16
55–74								
2000	602	49	104	18	297	13	32	4
2001	631	44	114	14	273	19	48	6
2002	604	43	126	11	266	11	56	4
2003	621	49	109	16	253	17	45	3
2004	623	57	100	14	308	15	45	9
75 plus								
2000	248	15	31	2	154	6	16	3
2001	250	15	24	4	148	6	18	1
2002	201	10	20	4	156	16	16	3
2003	241	8	27	4	161	6	12	—
2004	256	19	31	4	170	9	17	1
All ages								
2000	3,511	252	674	140	1,232	68	204	45
2001	3,438	255	646	132	1,141	60	241	26
2002	3,304	230	676	142	1,149	76	223	41
2003	3,316	254	577	112	1,143	80	216	32
2004	3,309	258	602	105	1,225	73	225	41

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[1] The cause of death for suicide was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959 for 2000 for England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-IO) codes X60-X84 for Scotland from 2000 to 2004, and for England and Wales and Northern Ireland for the years 2001 to 2004.

[2] The cause of death for undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 for 2000 for Northern Ireland, E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for 2000 for England and Wales, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-IO) codes X60-X84 for Scotland from 2000 to 2004, for Northern Ireland for the years 2001 to 2004, and codes X60-X84 excluding pending verdicts for England and Wales for the years 2001 to 2004.

[3] Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* suicides and *(b)* male suicides there were in the UK in each of the last five years. [59518]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 10 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many *(a)* suicides and *(b)* male suicides there were in the UK in each of the last five years. (59518)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2004. The table below shows the number of deaths with a verdict of suicide or undetermined intent by sex in the United Kingdom for the years 2000 to 2004.

Death from suicide[1] and injury of undetermined intent[2], United Kingdom, 2000 to 2004[3]

	(a) Persons	*(b) Males*	*Number Females*
2000	6,149	4,597	1,552
2001	5,965	4,489	1,476
2002	5,857	4,363	1,494
2003	5,762	4,285	1,477
2004	5,930	4,293	1,637

[1] The cause of death for suicide was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959for 2000 for England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84 for Scotland from 2000 to 2004, and for England and Wales and Northern Ireland for the years 2001 to 2004.

[2] The cause of death for undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 for 2000 for Northern Ireland, E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for 2000 for England and Wales, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84 for Scotland from 2000 to 2004, for Northern Ireland for the years 2001 to 2004, and codes X60-X84 excluding pending verdicts for England and Wales for the years 2001 to 2004.

[3] Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what technical problems were experienced with the tax credit computer system in *(a)* November and December 2005 and *(b)* January 2006; how many claims were delayed as a result; and if he will make a statement. [47850]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 6 February 2006]*: There were no problems with the availability of the tax credits IT system, in terms of unplanned downtime, during the period specified. However, a technical problem with the IT system meant that some 44,000 tax credit payments, which should have been made between 26 and 28 December, were paid late. All had been paid by 4 January.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there is a limit on the number of tax credit claims from 2003–04 that can be reassessed by staff in light of new information. [56946]

Dawn Primarolo: Technically tax credit claims are not assessed and therefore cannot be "reassessed". The word 'assessment' does not appear in the tax credits legislation.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Government are taking to reduce tax credit fraud; and if he will make a statement. [60227]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 14 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 1849W.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit has been in each year since their introduction; and what percentage of these costs was accounted for by administration. [59339]

Dawn Primarolo: Expenditure on Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit in 2003–04 and 2004–05 can be found in Note 3 of the Trust Statement for the Department of Inland Revenue 2003–04 and 2004–05 Accounts respectively.

For information in administration costs I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Goodman) on 16 March 2006 (59081).

Tax Fraud

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from insurance companies under investigation for alleged tax fraud; and if he will make a statement. [59633]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Representations are made to Treasury Ministers and officials on a wide range issues by a variety of organisations in the public and private sectors and by individuals as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As was the case with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all representations and submissions made to the Treasury.

Tax-free Income

Philip Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the estimated total cost to public funds would be if the tax-free income threshold were raised to £12,000; [59745]

(2) what the estimated total cost to the Treasury would be if a single tax rate of *(a)* 10, *(b)* 20, *(c)* 30 and *(d)* 40 per cent. were levied on all earned and unearned income over a £12,000 threshold. [59746]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is provided in the table.

Year 2005–06

Universal personal allowances[1] (£)	*Starting rate (percentage)*	*Basic rate (percentage)*	*Higher rate (percentage)*	*Yield (£ billion)*
12,000	10	20/22[2]	32.5/40[3]	-37.6
12,000[4]	10	10	10	-90.0
12,000[4]	20	20	20	-54.3
12,000[4]	30	30	30	-19.6
12,000[4]	40	40	40	+ 15.1

[1] The estimates assume all personal allowances, including age-related personal allowances, are increased to £12,000.

[2] Savings and earnings are currently taxed at 20 per cent. and 22 per cent. respectively.

[3] The higher rate on dividend income is currently taxed at 32.5 per cent., while the higher rate on savings and earnings is40 per cent..

[4] The option implies a single rate above a universal personal allowances of £12,000.

The income tax information is based upon the 2003–04 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) and projected forward to 2005–06 in line with December 2005 pre-Budget HM Treasury assumptions. The figures exclude any estimate of behavioural response to the tax changes, which could be significant given the scale of the changes.

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Valuation Office Agency holds aerial photography produced *(a)* externally and *(b)* in-house. [59128]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) does not produce aerial photography in-house. A small number of externally produced sample aerial photographs, made available by potential suppliers when the use of aerial photography was considered and rejected in 2003.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Valuation Office Agency has held a contract with Getmapping in the last five years. [59132]

Dawn Primarolo: No.

World Heritage Sites

David Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Minister in his Department has responsibility for issues relating to world heritage sites. [59104]

John Healey: Lead responsibility for policy on World Heritage Sites rests with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport works closely with relevant Government Departments on all issues affecting World Heritage Sites. Within the Treasury I have responsibility for issues concerning World Heritage sites which fall within this Department's policy remit.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Competitions

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department is taking to tackle the misuse of competitions where letters are sent requesting payment in advance of receiving a cash prize. [60149]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Under section 14 of the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976 (which is the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) it is an offence to promote an unlawful lottery or an unlawful prize competition. The Office of Fair Trading can enforce section 14 and also regularly runs campaigns to raise awareness of this and other scams. Obtaining money by deception would also be a matter for the police.

Directorial Accountability

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support his Department makes available for the training of non-executive directors on *(a)* the development of proper systems of company accountability to shareholders including rewards and terms and conditions for executives and *(b)* the protection of whistle-blowers. [59695]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The DTIs 'Building Better Boards' publication was published in December 2004. It recommends that companies should think more systematically about the effectiveness of their boards, their recruitment processes and the way in which they develop personnel. It also provides guidance to aspiring non-executives.

Appendix 1 contains signposts to training resources where training on a wide range of issues may be found. Building Better Boards can be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/DTI_BETTERBOARDS.pdf.

Gas/Electricity Prices

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to investigate the reasons for the increases in *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity prices in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [58701]

Malcolm Wicks: In its role as regulator for the gas and electricity markets, Ofgem continually undertakes market monitoring in relation to both markets to ensure that they are operating effectively. As part of this monitoring role, Ofgem has been assessing the recent trends in GB gas and electricity prices. In addition, Ofgem has held several seminars in relation to the operation of the gas and electricity markets over winter 2005–06 which examined the supply/demand fundamentals associated with the recent prices. Details of the information presented at these seminars can be found on Ofgem's website at: http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem/work/indexjsp?section = areasofwork/wholesalemarketmonitoring/wholesalemarketmonitoring01.

The Government understands the tough conditions that high-energy users are operating in and we are leaving no stone unturned, working closely with industry to mitigate the situation and reduce the impact. Our discussions with the Energy Intensive Users' Group have helped us focus our efforts on maximising gas supplies, improving the operation of the market, encouraging demand-side response and pursuing fair access to markets across Europe.

The Government takes the issue of the potential impact of rising prices on the number of households in fuel poverty very seriously. Government, with other interested parties, has taken a range of measures to mitigate the impact of price rises, including further assistance to elderly households through the significant additional funding of £300 million to tackle fuel poverty across the UK announced in the pre-Budget report in December 2005.

Global Nuclear Energy Partnership

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the United Kingdom joined the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership; what resources have been committed to date in support of the partnership; what future resources are expected be committed to the partnership; how many meetings of the partnership have been held to date; and if he will place in the Library copies of the minutes of partnership meetings and documents circulated amongst partnership members to date. [56893]

Malcolm Wicks: The United Kingdom is discussing, with the United States, the development of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. There have been bi-lateral meetings between the United Kingdom and the United States to discuss the American proposals. However, this proposed programme is at very early stage and there is, currently, no formal membership mechanism. No resources have been committed by the UK to this proposed initiative. Full details of the partnership, including UK participation, remain to be discussed.

Labelling (Fabrics)

Mr. Goodwill: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures he has taken to ensure the labelling of fabrics that have been treated with tri-n-butyl tin. [58343]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. The use of tributyl tin (which might also be described as tri-n-butyl tin) is regulated within the European Union by the Biocidal Products Directive (implemented in the UK by the Biocidal Products Regulations 2001). Certain uses of tributyl tin are already banned throughout the EU, and certain tributyl tin derivates are required to be removed from the market by 1 September 2006. The use of all other tributyl tin derivates currently approved is under review.

All consumer products are subject to the requirements of the General Product Safety Directive (implemented in the UK by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005), where they are not otherwise, and to the same extent, subject to product-specific regulation. The General Product Safety Regulations require that manufacturers and importers should satisfy themselves, before placing any product on the market, that it is safe in normal and reasonably foreseeable use; and that they should conduct such safety assessments as may be necessary to demonstrate the safety of the product.

North West Regional Development Agency

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the consultants employed by the North West regional development agency in each of the last five years; and how much was paid to each. [58443]

Alun Michael: The information is contained in the following table.

£000

Supplier	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total*
KPMG	93,147	48,428	148,408	406,625	596,268	1,292,876
Sema UK Ltd.	87,256	103,000	136,188	7,143	—	333,586
Dyer Associates	120,150	72,391	30,085	44,138	240	267,004
Regeneris Consulting Ltd.	—	15,681	—	45,890	124,998	186,569
Dtz Pieda Consulting	110,248	6,613	—	10,000	43,879	170,740
Sqw Ltd.	31,370	21,060	1,216	94,229	4,300	152,175
PricewaterhouseCoopers	26,511	17,732	—	73,698	27,924	145,864
Athito Consulting Ltd.	—	—	—	—	96,600	96,600
Mr. John A Jones	15,941	28,352	20,401	11,652	17,159	93,505
Turner & Townsend	22,975	23,900	6,610	35,971	—	89,456
Amtek UK Ltd.	—	—	83,361	—	—	83,361
York Aviation	—	—	—	70,591	12,500	83,091
The Hay Group Management Ltd.	37,077	18,475	21,055	5,600	—	82,207
LKW Consulting Ltd.	—	—	—	14,700	64,200	78,900
Deluca	—	—	—	78,103	—	78,103
Oxford Intelligence	—	—	—	69,000	—	69,000
J4B plc	—	—	—	—	66,173	66,173
Norman Broadbent	—	—	—	63,577	—	63,577
Firecracker Projects Ltd.	—	—	—	17,772	35,968	53,740
Ultima Business Solutions	—	—	—	27,600	25,900	53,500
Pion Economics	—	9,250	41,950	—	—	51,200
Sue Southam	—	—	32,653	16,087	—	48,740
Strategem Ltd.	10,500	—	—	27,200	6,400	44,100
Jmp Consultants Ltd	—	—	41,576	2,001	—	43,577
Bura	—	—	—	36,000	—	36,000
Tamesis Business Communications	—	—	7,662	27,043	—	34,700
Whitehead Mann	—	—	—	24,200	8,206	32,400
Dehavilland Information Services Plc	—	—	31,440	—	—	31,440
Deloitte Mcs Limited	—	—	—	7,297	23,397	30,694
Amjec Ltd	—	—	—	28,800	—	28,800
Intuition Group Ltd	6,949	2,850	8,925	9,525	—	28,248
Locum Destination Consulting Ltd	—	—	27,783	—	—	27,783
Penna Executive Search	—	—	—	26,705	621	27,325
Colliers Cre Plc	—	—	—	—	26,770	26,770
Entec Uk Limited	—	—	—	—	26,285	26,285
Selby And Mills	—	—	—	16,023	10,006	26,029
Paul Robertson	—	—	8,200	16,975	—	25,175
Wendy Davison Marketing Consultant	—	—	25,000	—	—	25,000
Freelance Marketing Solutions	—	—	25,000	—	—	25,000
AMP	—	—	12,000	12,000	—	24,000
Rembrandt Consulting Limited	—	19,195	4,630	—	—	23,825
J.P. Clarke	—	—	12,169	10,977	—	23,147
Leyer Pritzkow	—	—	1,692	21,442	—	23,134

£000

Supplier	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total*
Silcock Dawson And Partners	—	5,950	5,750	10,550	—	22,250
Hfm Consulting Limited	—	—	—	—	21,765	21,765
Penna Group Finance	—	—	—	4,950	16,658	21,608
Tweeds	21,472	—	—	—	—	21,472
Ekos Limited	—	—	21,230	21,230	—	—
John Glester Consultancy Services	20,895	—	—	—	—	20,895
Robertson Cooper Limited	—	—	—	2,472	17,692	20,164
Gibson Thorpe Associates	4,046	—	—	15,764	—	19,809
Macnicol Graham	—	—	—	—	19,694	19,694
S and S Data Ltd	—	—	—	18,085	—	18,085
Inno Tsd	—	—	—	—	17,500	17,500
Giles Pott	—	—	16,500	—	—	16,500
Rocket Multimedia Limited	—	—	16,314	—	—	16,314
Future 4 Development and Consultancy	—	—	—	16,150	—	16,150
Oxgen Marketing Limited	—	—	—	16,000	—	16,000
The Regional Policy Forum	—	15,000	570	—	—	15,570
Creative Concern	—	—	—	15,500	—	15,500
Gw 135 Ltd T/A Bucknall Austin	—	—	—	13,550	1,305	14,855
Dbi Consulting	—	—	—	13,953	—	13,953
Robinson Keane Search and Selection	—	—	13,333	—	—	13,333
Ebrahim K Bassa and Associates	—	—	—	—	13,300	13,300
Alpha Consolidated Training	—	9,610	3,600	—	—	13,210
Arthur D Little Limited	—	—	—	12,000	—	12,000
Sandberg Lip	—	—	—	—	11,346	11,346
The Campaign Company Limited	—	—	—	10,918	—	10,918
Eps Consulting	—	—	—	—	10,539	10,539
Dove Talk Ltd	—	—	—	—	10,142	10,142
Alastair Wheeler	—	—	—	4,875	5,259	10,134
Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Co Ltd	—	—	—	10,055	—	10,055
M S Ashton	—	—	10,000	—	—	10,000
Synergy Associates	—	—	10,000	—	—	10,000
Joanne Hughes Market Research	—	—	10,000	—	—	10,000
Other	41,252	17,813	59,783	123,902	70,136	312,88
Grand Total	649,788	435,300	873,854	1,647,287	1,454,358	5,060,588

State Aid

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what UK state aids have been authorised by the European Commission over the past 12 months. [59804]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In the past 12 months, the European Commission has approved 47 UK State aids.

Notified Schemes:

The following tables sets out information on the UK State aids authorised by the Commission over the past 12 months including agriculture, fisheries and transport aids. The information is provided in two tables: Table 1 covers Industry and Transport Aids and Table 2, information on Fisheries and Agriculture Aids.

Table 1

Date of Approval	*Title*	*Commission Reference*
22 February 2006	Rural Network Support	N166/05
20 February 2006	Fibre Speed broadband Project in Wales	N131/05
20 February 2006	Waste Resources Action Programme, Prolongation and Extension	N412/05
1 February 2006	Climate Change Levy Exemption for Natural Gas in Northern Ireland	N631/05
25 January 2006	Digital Replacement Licences UK	NN64/05
23 January 2006	East Midlands Media Investment	N73/05
22 December 2005	Revision of Grant for Collaborative R&D	N3 19/05
21 December 2005	Regional Innovative Broadband Support in Wales	N57/05
21 December 2005	Outer Harbour Great Yarmouth	N503/05
12 December 2005	Amendments to Renewables Obligation Order 2005	N474/05
17 November 2005	PPARC Industry Programme Support Scheme	N473/05
8 November 2005	Prolongation Viridian Growth Fund	N425/05
20 October 2005	Nesta Invention and Innovation programme	NN81/05
5 October 2005	Rural Broadband Access Project	N267/05
5 October 2005	Modification of the Climate Change Levy	N190a/05
9 September 2005	Low Carbon Research and Development Programme	NN56/05
24 August 2005	Disaster Recovery United Biscuits—McVitie Factory in Carlisle	N231/05
27 July 2005	Wave and Tidal Stream Energy Demonstration	N3 18/05
5 July 2005	Infrastructure Grant Programme	N135/05
22 June 2005	EWSI Channel Tunnel Freight Support Funding	NI 59/05

Table 1

Date of Approval	*Title*	*Commission Reference*
7 June 2005	Irish language Broadcast Fund	N503/05
7 June 2005	Rescue Aid hi Favour of MG Rover	NN42/05
3 May 2005	Photovoltaic Demonstration Programme—prolongation until 2006	Nil/05
7 March 2005	Aggregated Public Sector procurement of Broad band in Scotland	NI 17/05
2 March 2005	Training Aid to Ford Motor Company	N591/05

Table 2

Date of Approval	*Title*	*Commission Reference*
14 March 2005	Breeding Programme for TSE	N88/06
3 March 2005	Strategic Timber Transport Fund	N459/05
27 February 2005	National Equine Breeding Evaluation and Performance Database	N435/04
25 January 2005	Modification of Climate Change Levy Rebate (Horticulture)	N190b/05
22 December 2005	Meat Generic Advertising Scheme Extension (Wales)	N584/05
22 December 2005	Meat Quality Advertising Scheme Extension	N585/04
8 December 2005	Extension to the Red Met Industry Forum Scheme	N5 16/05
7 December 2005	Beef Market Restoration Programme (England and Northern Ireland)	N222/05
17 November 2005	Amendment to Agricultural Development Scheme	N508/05
17 October 2005	Extension to the Scottish Farm Business Advice and Skills Service	N439/05
17 October 2005	Organic Farming Scheme (Northern Ireland)	NN48/05
29 September 2005	BSE Testing of 30–42 Months Beef Assurance Scheme Cattle and Casualties aged 24–30 months slaughtered for human consumption	NN6/04
29 September 2005	BSE testing of Cattle slaughtered for human consumption aged over 30 months	NN17/04
14 September 2005	National Fallen Stock Scheme (Fallen Fish)	N285/05
11 August 2005	Lamb Promotion Scheme (Northern Ireland)	N290/05
20 July 2005	Climate Change Levy (Horticulture)	NN12/04
20 July 2005	Climate Change Levy Relief (Food and Drink Processing)	NN27/04
20 July 2005	Climate Change Levy Rebate (Pigs and Poultry Sector)	NN28/04
20 July 2005	The National Non- Food Crops Centre	NI 90/04
20 July 2005	England Rural Development Programme (Environmental Stewardship)	N 406/04
3 June 2005	Amendment to the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme (Northern Ireland)	NI 03/05
15 March 2005	Extension to Northern Ireland Beef Quality Initiative	N35/05

Block Exemptions:

In addition to the information provided above, in the past 12 months, a number of other aids came under the Block Exemption Regulations which do not require prior approval by the Commission. These comprised: four under the Employment block exemption, 42 under the SME block exemption, 23 under the Training block exemption and 16 under the Agricultural block exemption. Information on the number of approved UK state aids is published by the European Commission and is available on the Commission's website at:

http://europa.eu.mt/comm/competition/state aid/scoreboard/

Tour Operators

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department regulates tour operators providing services to UK residents travelling overseas; and if he will make a statement. [60256]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Organisers and sellers of package holidays are regulated under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tour Regulations 1992 (S.I.1992/3288), which implement the Council Directive (90/314/EEC), on Package Travel, in the United Kingdom.

The regulations are enforced by Trading Standards Departments in Great Britain, and the Department of Economic Development in Northern Ireland.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bioscience and Technology Institute

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the remit is of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment inquiry into the Bioscience and Technology Institute. [59666]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is required under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 to appoint Company Inspectors when appropriate where a complaint is received from the public or members or officers of the company or any body or person connected with the company. The Department's function in this area is to protect the public and to regulate the market place.

In the case of the Bioscience and Technology Institute, inspectors were appointed by the Department on 22 December 2005 as a result of a complaint received by it.

As with all such inquiries, the Inspectors' terms of reference are to look into the substance of a complaint and any other matters which they may encounter during their investigation.

Caravan Sector

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the *(a)* static and *(b)* touring caravan sector has contributed to the economy of Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [58765]

Angela E. Smith: In 2004, domestic holidaymakers spent £11.3 million during holidays staying in static caravans, and £1.3 million during holidays in touring caravans. An estimated £3.3 million was generated from visitors to Northern Ireland, choosing to stay in the caravan and camping sector. An annual breakdown is provided in the following tables.

Estimated spend for visitors staying in caravans/camping

	£ million Spend
2004	3.3
2003	3.0
2002	2.7
2001	2.8
2000	2.7
1999	2.7
1998	2.2
1997	2.1
1996	2.1
1995	2.1

Estimated spend for domestic holidaymakers staying in towed and static caravans

£ million

	Towed caravans	Static caravans (owned and not owned)
2004	1.3	11.3
2003	3.2	13.0
2002	5.8	11.9
2001	[illegible]	16.2
2000	[illegible]	15.5
1999	[illegible]	16.1
1998	[illegible]	16.6
1997	1.7	13.9
1996	3.3	18.4
1995	6.0	14.9

Citybus/Metro

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the last occasion was that a person was convicted for non-payment of the proper fare on the Citybus system. [57905]

Mr. Woodward: Translink have advised that the last occasion that a person was convicted for non-payment of the proper fare on the Citybus system was 26 October 1999.

Coastal Erosion

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Department of the Northern Ireland Office is responsible for *(a)* the prevention of coastal erosion and *(b)* its effect on tourism in Northern Ireland. [58770]

Mr. Hanson: In response to *(a)* I would refer the hon. Lady to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) on 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1232W.

Regarding *(b)* our policies to tackle coastal erosion are guided by the Bateman formula, an historic interdepartmental agreement. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) is responsible for coastal protection works associated with schemes relating to tourism. DETI has not carried out an assessment of the effect of coastal erosion on tourism in Northern Ireland.

Cross-border Bodies (Bullying/Mismanagement)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been lodged by Northern Ireland civil servants for alleged *(a)* bullying and *(b)* mismanagement in each of the cross border bodies in each of the last three years. [56679]

Angela E. Smith: In the last three years a complaint alleging bullying was made by a Northern Ireland civil servant working in Waterways Ireland. This complaint included allegations of mismanagement. No complaint has been lodged against any other cross border body.

Demographics

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the extent to which the demographic balance between communities in each city and county of Northern Ireland has changed in the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [59152]

Mr. Hanson: Table 1 provides community background information from the 2001 Census for each of the five cities in Northern Ireland and each Local Government District (information at county level is not routinely produced).

The provision of community background information, which was derived using information collected on both current religion and religion brought up in, was a new development in the 2001 Census aimed at meeting the need for additional equality monitoring data. Directly comparable community background information is not available from the 1991 Census.

Table 1: 2001 Census Community Background by City (approximated) and Local Government District

		Percentage			
Area	All persons	Catholic	Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)	Other religions and philosophies	None
City (approximated)					
Belfast Urban Area	276,459	47.2	48.6	0.8	3.4
Lisburn Urban Area	71,465	41.7	54.2	0.4	3.8
Londonderry	83,699	79.1	19.4	0.4	1.1
Newry City	27,433	89.6	9.4	0.2	0.9
Armagh City	14,590	68.3	30.2	0.3	1.3
Local Government District					
Antrim	48,366	38.6	56.7	0.5	4.3
Ards	73,244	12.6	82.5	0.4	4.5
Armagh	54,263	48.7	50.1	0.2	1.1
Ballymena	58,610	21.0	76.3	0.3	2.4

Table 1: 2001 Census Community Background by City (approximated) and Local Government District

		Percentage			
Area	*All persons*	*Catholic*	*Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)*	*Other religions and philosophies*	*None*
Ballymoney	26,894	31.9	66.2	0.1	1.8
Banbridge	41,392	31.5	66.0	0.2	2.3
Belfast	277,391	47.2	48.6	0.8	3.4
Carrickfergus	37,659	8.7	85.1	0.4	5.9
Castlereagh	66,488	18.3	77.0	0.6	4.2
Coleraine	56,315	27.2	69.4	0.5	2.9
Cookstown	32,581	57.6	41.1	0.1	1.1
Craigavon	80,671	44.7	52.9	0.5	2.0
Derry	105,066	75.4	23.2	0.4	1.1
Down	63,828	62.0	35.5	0.2	2.4
Dungannon	47,735	60.8	38.2	0.2	0.8
Fermanagh	57,527	58.7	39.8	0.3	1.2
Larne	30,832	25.2	71.7	0.1	3.0
Limavady	32,422	56.6	41.6	0.1	1.7
Lisburn	108,694	33.4	62.8	0.4	3.5
Magherafelt	39,780	64.1	34.8	0.2	0.8
Moyle	15,933	60.3	38.3	0.1	1.3
Newry and Mourne	87,058	80.6	18.5	0.1	0.8
Newtownabbey	79,995	19.4	76.2	0.5	4.0
North Down	76,323	12.6	80.5	0.5	6.4
Omagh	47,952	69.1	29.7	0.2	1.0
Strabane	38,248	66.2	33.3	0.1	0.4
Northern Ireland	1,685,267	43.8	53.1	0.4	2.7

Notes:

1. The term Catholic includes those respondents who gave their religion as Catholic or Roman Catholic.
2. Cities included in this table are defined using the statutory settlement development limits provided by the DOE Planning Service as at March 2004. The Belfast Urban Area does not include the urban areas of Castlereagh, Newtownabbey or Greenisland. Newry City includes the settlement of Bessbrook.
3. The boundaries for Banbridge and Newry & Mourne Local Government Districts in the 2001 Census are different from those in place at the time of the 1991 Census due to a boundary change in 1992.

Information on current religion was collected in both the 1991 Census and the 2001 Census, however caution should be exercised when seeking to assess the extent of change over time due to factors such as:

changes in the question wording giving rise to different output categories;

differences in the levels of non-response to the religion question;

different population bases;

different treatments of non-response in each of the Censuses; and

different output geographies due to boundary changes.

Tables 2 and 3 present a breakdown of the religion information gathered in both the 1991 and 2001 Censuses at Local Government District level (comparable information for cities was not produced for 1991).

Table 2: 2001 Census Religion by Local Government District

		Percentage			
Area	*All persons*	*Catholic*	*Protestant*	*Other religions and philosophies*	*No religion or religion not stated*
Antrim	48,366	35.2	47.2	0.3	17.3
Ards	73,244	10.4	68.7	0.3	20.6
Armagh	54,263	45.4	45.5	0.1	9.0
Ballymena	58,610	19.0	67.8	0.3	13.0
Ballymoney	26,894	29.6	59.1	0.1	11.3
Banbridge	41,392	28.6	58.7	0.2	12.5
Belfast	277,391	42.1	40.4	0.6	16.9
Carrickfergus	37,659	6.5	70.4	0.3	22.8
Castlereagh	66,488	15.8	64.9	0.5	18.8
Coleraine	56,315	24.1	60.5	0.3	15.1
Cookstown	32,581	55.2	38.0	0.1	6.8
Craigavon	80,671	41.7	46.7	0.4	11.3
Derry	105,066	70.9	20.8	0.3	8.1
Down	63,828	57.1	29.2	0.1	13.6
Dungannon	47,735	57.4	34.9	0.1	7.6
Fermanagh	57,527	55.5	36.1	0.2	8.1
Larne	30,832	22.3	61.9	0.1	15.8
Limavady	32,422	53.1	36.2	0.1	10.6
Lisburn	108,694	30.1	53.6	0.3	16.1
Magherafelt	39,780	61.5	32.0	0.2	6.3
Moyle	15,933	56.6	33.8	0.1	9.5
Newry and Mourne	87,058	75.9	16.4	0.1	7.6
Newtownabbey	79,995	17.1	64.5	0.3	18.1
North Down	76,323	10.0	64.5	0.4	25.1
Omagh	47,952	65.1	26.3	0.2	8.4
Strabane	38,248	63.1	30.9	0.1	5.9
Northern Ireland	1,685,267	40.3	45.6	0.3	13.9

Notes:

1. The term Catholic includes those respondents who gave their religion as Catholic or Roman Catholic.

2. The boundaries for Banbridge and Newry & Mourne Local Government Districts in the 2001 Census are different from those in place at the time of the 1991 Census due to a boundary change in 1992.

Table 3: 1991 Census Religion by Local Government District

		Percentage			
Area	*All persons*	*Roman Catholic*	*Protestant and Other*	*None*	*Not Stated*
Antrim	44,516	31.7	54.8	4.6	9.0
Ards	64,764	11.3	73.8	6.0	8.8
Armagh	51,817	45.4	47.2	1.6	5.9
Ballymena	56,641	18.4	71.5	3.3	6.9
Ballymoney	24,198	30.2	61.5	2.2	6.2
Banbridge	33,482	27.6	61.4	2.8	8.1
Belfast	279,237	39.0	47.6	5.3	8.2
Carrickfergus	32,750	6.9	77.6	7.6	7.9
Castlereagh	60,799	9.5	75.5	6.3	8.8
Coleraine	50,438	22.5	66.4	4.2	7.0
Cookstown	31,082	53.2	40.3	1.2	5.3
Craigavon	74,986	40.1	50.0	2.6	7.3
Derry	95,371	69.5	23.6	1.4	5.5
Down	58,008	56.0	33.1	2.9	8.0
Dungannon	45,428	55.7	38.3	0.9	5.2
Fermanagh	54,033	54.9	39.0	1.4	4.7
Larne	29,419	22.1	64.9	4.4	8.6
Limavady	29,567	51.7	39.3	1.7	7.3
Lisburn	99,458	26.9	60.8	4.8	7.4
Magherafelt	362,93	58.9	34.8	0.9	5.4
Moyle	147,89	52.2	39.5	1.7	6.6
Newry and Mourne	82,943	71.8	19.8	1.1	7.2
Newtownabbey	74,035	13.0	71.8	6.1	9.2
North Down	71,832	9.0	73.5	8.6	9.0
Omagh	45,809	64.3	29.7	1.2	4.7
Strabane	36,141	61.8	33.4	0.8	4.0
Northern Ireland	1,577,836	38.4	50.6	3.8	7.3

Notes:

1. In 1991 Census outputs, non-Christian religions were combined with Protestants.

2. The boundaries for Banbridge and Newry & Mourne Local Government Districts in the 2001 Census are different from those in place at the time of the 1991 Census due to a boundary change in 1992.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people over the age of 65 years there are in Northern Ireland. [59522]

Angela E. Smith: At mid-year 2004, the official estimate of the Northern Ireland resident population aged 65 years and over was 233,400 people.

Deprivation

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has for additional schemes to tackle deprivation in *(a)* (i) the Erskin and (ii) the Grange estates in Ballyclane, *(b)* housing estates in Antrim Town and *(c)* the (i) New Mossley and (ii) Ballyduff areas of Newtownabbey. [58052]

Mr. Hanson: In the upcoming four financial years the Housing Executive will improve some 1,330 dwellings in these areas at a cost in excess of £12 million through a number of programmes:

Decent Homes;

The Replacement of Non-Manual Heating Systems;

Environmental Improvements;

Neighbourhood Regeneration;

A number of other, non housing related initiatives are also under way in these areas. A neighbourhood partnership involving the local residents of the Grange and Thornhill and the statutory providers, including local schools and churches, is currently being established under the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The partnership will bring forward a vision framework and associated action plan to help address deprivation factors in the estate. In addition a number of environmental improvement schemes, to be taken forward under the creating common ground initiative, are also proposed for the main housing estates in Antrim.

All of these programmes will contribute substantially to improving living conditions in these areas.

Firefighters

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many part-time firefighters applied to become full-time firefighters in each Northern Ireland Fire Service station in each of the last five years, and how many of those applications were successful. [49106]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not held centrally, either within the Department or by the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland and will take time to prepare. I will write to the hon. Gentleman when the information becomes available.

Substantive answer from Shaun Woodward to Mark Durkan:

The numbers of retained firefighters applying to become full-time firefighters in the recruitment campaigns in 2001 and 2003 are set out in the tables below. In the 2005 campaign, a process of random selection was used in the first instance and it is therefore not possible to identify the numbers of retained personnel eliminated at the first stage of selection. However, of the 300 applications randomly selected, 6 were from retained firefighters and of these, three were successful.

Retained personnel who applied for whole-time recruitment 2001

Station	Breakdown by station Number of applicants	Appointed
Antrim	2	—
Armagh	3	—
Ballyclare	3	—
Ballymena	1	—
Ballymoney	1	1
Ballynahinch	1	—
Ballywalter	1	—
Banbridge	6	—
Bangor	5	—
Carnlough	1	—
Carrickfergus	3	—
Carryduff	4	2
Castlederg	2	—
Clogher	3	—
Coleraine	5	—
Comber	1	—
Cookstown	3	—
Crossmaglen	1	—
Crumlin	3	—
Cushendall	1	1
Donaghadee	2	—
Downpatrick	2	—
Dungannon	1	—
Dungiven	3	—
Fintona	2	—
Glengormley	2	—
Holywood	3	—
Keady	1	—
Kilkeel	1	—
Larne	3	1
Limavady	2	—
Lisnaskea	1	—
Lurgan	3	—
Maghera	2	—
Magherafelt	3	—
Newcastle	1	—
Newry	5	1
Newtownards	4	—
Newtownhamilton	1	—
Newtownstewart	1	—
Omagh	4	—
Portaferry	1	—
Portrush	1	—
Portstewart	2	—
Rathfriland	1	—
Strabane	3	—
Warrenpoint	5	1
Whitehead	2	—
Total	112	7

Retained personnel who applied for whole-time recruitment 2003

Station	Breakdown by station Number of applicants	Appointed
Antrim	2	2
Armagh	4	1
Ballycastle	2	—
Ballyclare	2	—
Ballymena	3	—
Ballymoney	2	—
Ballynahinch	1	—
Ballywalter	3	—
Banbridge	7	—
Bangor	4	—
Carnlough	3	—
Carrickfergus	3	2
Carryduff	6	1
Castlederg	6	—
Clogher	3	—
Coleraine	2	—
Comber	2	—
Cookstown	3	—
Crossmaglen	1	1
Crumlin	5	—
Cushendall	4	—
Donaghadee	2	—
Downpatrick	3	—
Dungannon	4	—
Dungiven	3	—
Enniskillen	2	—
Fintona	2	—
Holywood	2	—
Irvinestown	2	—
Keady	3	—
Kilkeel	5	—
Larne	5	—
Limavady	6	—
Lisburn	3	—
Lurgan	2	1
Maghera	1	—
Magherafelt	3	—
Newcastle	2	—
Newry	5	—
Newtownards	4	—
Newtownhamilton	2	—
Newtownstewart	3	—
Omagh	5	—
Portadown	4	—
Portaferry	2	—
Portrush	3	—
Rathfriland	1	—
Strabane	7	—
Warrenpoint	4	1
Total	158	9

Retained personnel who applied for whole-time recruitment 2005

Station	Breakdown by station Number of applicants	Appointed
Ballynahinch	1	—
Banbridge	1	1
Crossmaglen	1	1
Omagh	1	—
Portadown	1	—
Warrenpoint	1	1
Total	6	3

Learning Disability

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what educational provision is made in Northern Ireland for young people with profound learning disabilities aged over 19 years; and in what locations. [58146]

Angela E. Smith: In 2003–04 there were 1,696 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SLDD) aged between 19 and 25 years enrolled in the statutory further education sector, participating both in mainstream education and training provision alongside non-SLDD students, as well as on courses designed specifically for SLDD students. In addition to the provision within further education colleges, this figure also represents college provision in locations other than college sites; however information on the exact locations is not held by the Department. The term SLDD covers all degrees of learning difficulties, including those who

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may have profound learning difficulties, but the Department does not hold information on the actual number of such students with profound learning difficulties.

In addition, under the Skills and Science Fund, the Department for Employment and Learning will be developing more flexible provision focusing on the personal and social development needs of young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Murals (Loyalist Areas)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Community Relations Council in Northern Ireland has to offer support and financial assistance for the development of cultural and historical murals in Loyalist areas. [58067]

Angela E. Smith: The Community Relations Council continues to welcome and consider practical proposals that will remove aggressive paramilitary murals, including those in Loyalist areas, and replace them with agreed cultural and historic imagery.

Policing Board

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the members chosen for the Policing Board for Northern Ireland; and when he expects to announce the final composition. [57952]

Mr. Woodward: My right hon. Friend the Member for Neath (Peter Hain) announced the new membership of the Northern Ireland Policing Board on 13 March 2006.

The membership is as follows:

Ian Paisley Jnr MLA
William Hay MLA
Arlene Foster MLA
Peter Weir MLA
Fred Cobain MLA
Danny Kennedy MLA
Alex Attwood MLA
Dolores Kelly MLA
Professor Sir Desmond Rea
Joe Byrne
Barry Gilligan
Pauline McCabe
Rosaleen Moore
Suneil Sharma
Dawn Purvis
Brian Rea MBE JP
Trevor Ringland
Brendan Duddy
Deirdre MacBride

School Lands and Properties

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated value is of school lands and properties used by the *(a)* maintained, *(b)* controlled, *(c)* integrated and *(d)* Irish language sectors of education in Northern Ireland. [57973]

Angela E. Smith: The Valuation and Lands Agency of the Department of Finance and Personnel undertook a revised valuation of the school estate in 2003–04. The estimated valuations, which are shown as follows, are not readily available under the headings requested and cover nursery, primary, secondary, grammar and special school land and properties and school meals kitchen accommodations. These valuations are currently under review.

	£
Maintained (includes Irish medium)	860,000,000
Controlled (includes controlled integrated)	1,425,000,000
Voluntary (includes grant maintained integrated)	606,000,000
Total	2,891,000,000

Social Housing

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new social housing units have been built in Lagan Valley constituency in each year since 2001. [59096]

Mr. Hanson: The number of houses completed for each year is as follows:

	Number of houses
2000–01	130
2001–02	236
2002–03	86
2003–04	70
2004–05	69

In addition, for 2005–06, 204 houses are currently under construction, with a further 89 planned to go on site before the end of March.

The figures include new build and houses purchased from the open market either in good condition or for rehabilitation, prior to letting. All are additions to the social housing stock.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average number of persons on the waiting list for social housing in Lagan Valley constituency has been in each year since 2001. [59098]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the form requested. The Lagan Valley constituency includes areas covered by the Housing Executive's Lisburn District, Antrim Street, and the Dromore area of Banbridge.

The following table sets out the most recent figures on the number of Social Housing Applicants on the waiting list each year from September 2001 to September 2005 for the relevant areas. It also includes the numbers who were considered to be in housing stress.

Year to September:	*Lisburn, Antrim Street total applicants*	*Dromore total applicants*
2001	1,227	56
2002	1,415	62
2003	1,338	49
2004	1,400	70
2005	1,609	82

Women's Projects

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's budget has been allocated to projects specifically aimed at women in each of the last three years. [58875]

Mr. Hanson: In each of the last three financial years, the percentage of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's budget which was allocated to projects specifically aimed at women is shown on the following table.

Expenditure allocated to projects specifically aimed at women as a percentage of DCAL Budget

Financial year	*Percentage*
2003–04	0.3
2004–05	0.3
2005–06	0.3

The percentages shown against 2003–04 and 2004–05 have been calculated on the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's final budgets for those financial years. The percentage for 2005–06 has been calculated on the Department's provisional budget for that financial year and the estimated expenditure of the project providers.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pay

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent assessment he has made of equality of pay between male and female civil servants. [59435]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office undertook an equal pay review for the Senior Civil Service (SCS) in 2002 and equal pay has been re-examined each year since then as part of the Government's evidence to the Senior Salaries Review Body.

The link to this year's Government evidence is available at www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/performance/scs/index.asp

Under the delegated pay arrangements for staff below the SCS, every department and agency produced an equal pay action plan in 2003 as part of the Government's commitment to address the gender pay gap. Civil service organisations continue to monitor progress against their action plans and equality-proof their pay systems following implementation of annual pay awards.

Get Safe Online Campaign

Margaret Moran: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what further measures he plans to take to promote the Get Safe Online campaign. [59223]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Get Safe Online campaign was launched the end of October 2005. The campaign is a joint public and private sector initiative to raise awareness of the internet security and to help people to go online line safely and with confidence.

The Cabinet Office is a proud sponsor of the campaign alongside BT, Dell, eBay, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, Message Labs, Microsoft, securetrading and Yell.com. The Home Office, DTI, NISCC (National Infrastructure Security Coordination Centre) and the National Hi Tech Crime Unit—soon to be part of SOCA (Serious and Organised Crime Agency) are also involved in the project.

Get Safe Online is very much a collaboration amongst all these organisations. Government as well as online companies in the retail, finance and technology sectors all have an interest in ensuring that people know what to do to protect themselves, their families and their businesses whether they are shopping, banking or interacting with government online. In particular, as our Transformational Government Strategy states: "Government will also play its part to promote public confidence by leading a public/private campaign on internet safety", a commitment that Get Safe Online is successfully meeting.

The first phase of the campaign involved a PR campaign to raise awareness of the initiative and the website. A roadshow of internet security experts was taken round the major cities stopping at UK Online centres, shopping centres, colleges and libraries as well as Age Concern centres. There was also a competition through Metro newspapers around the country. The most prolific support for the campaign has been through the sponsors themselves. For example eBay, with over 13 million UK users a month, has given exposure to Get Safe Online on its website which would have cost in excess of £10 million to date.

This kind of campaign activity through the current sponsors will continue and we intend for the campaign to run for two to three years. A further phase of activity is planned over the next few months which entails online advertising as well as PR activity. Importantly, the initiative is gaining momentum and cooperation across community organisations and local government. Many local councils have put a link to Get Safe Online to help their cooperation from community organisations such as the NCPTA (National Council for Parent Teachers Associations) which is sending out a 'Parent's Guide' to all secondary schools which will include advice and information from Get Safe Online later this month. Work continues to recruit new sponsors and partners to the initiative which is essential to maintaining the progress of the campaign and we hope to be able to make some important announcements in the summer about future plans.

Local Authorities (Contingency Plans)

Mr. Syms: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which local authorities have undertaken practical tests of their contingency plans; and what assessment he has made of the outcomes. [59979]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government do not systematically gather detailed information about the number and nature of exercises carried out by local authorities.

Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004—which came fully into force on 14 November 2005—establishes a statutory framework for civil protection activity at the local level. The Act sets out clear roles and responsibilities for local responders and establishes a basis for effective performance management. Under this legislation Category 1 responders (e.g. local authorities, emergency services, health bodies) are required to maintain emergency plans and business continuity arrangements to ensure that they can respond effectively to the full range of emergencies. The legislation also requires Category 1 responders to put in place a programme of exercises to test the effectiveness of these plans.

Responders' performance against the requirements set out in the Act are being monitored by their existing performance assessment bodies (e.g. Audit Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary).

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Accessible Housing Register

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities maintain an accessible housing register. [56286]

Yvette Cooper: Allocations are a matter for local authorities to decide on, based upon local requirements. It is, therefore, up to each local authority to decide whether they wish to maintain an accessible housing register or not. The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Airfields

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued on residential development on airfields. [57432]

Yvette Cooper: Draft Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3), published for consultation on 5 December last year, set out a new policy framework for planning for housing in England, and will replace existing planning policy guidance (set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3)) when it is finalised later in the year.

The new policy statement does not change the approach to residential development on airfields.

Brownfield Development (Hampshire)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect on wildlife habitat of brownfield development in local authority areas in Hampshire which include special protection areas; and if he will make a statement. [59061]

Yvette Cooper: None. Any proposals for development on or near to a Special Protection Area (SPA) are subject to the provisions of the Conservation (Natural Habitats Etc) Regulations 1994. Before planning permission can be granted for any development close to a Special Protection Area (SPA), the local authority is required, under the regulations to make an appropriate assessment of the significance of the implications of that development on the SPA. The local authority should consult English Nature and have regard to any representations that it might make. If there are no alternative solutions, the authority may only agree to development that will adversely affect the integrity of the SPA if it can demonstrate that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Building Regulations

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will bring forward proposals to strengthen Part E of the Building Regulations (England and Wales) as they relate to resistance to the transmission of sound in relation to wooden or laminate floors. [53470]

Yvette Cooper: Sound insulation between dwellings is controlled under Part E of the Building Regulations. The Building Regulations apply to new buildings, and specified types of work in existing buildings. Currently, laying laminated flooring on an existing floor is not specifically controlled under the legislative scheme, and there are no current plans to amend the Building Regulations to provide for this.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has given local authorities to ensure the consistent application of Part M of the Building Regulations by building control officers. [54197]

Yvette Cooper: Guidance on application of the requirements of Building Regulations is contained in Approved Documents issued with the approval of the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. The requirements of the regulations are expressed in functional terms (Requirement Ml is that

> "Reasonable provision shall be made for people to gain access to and use the building and its facilities").

Every Approved Document states

> "Approved Documents are intended to provide guidance for some of the more common building situations. However, there may well be alternative ways of achieving compliance with the requirements. Thus there is no obligation to adopt any particular solution contained in an Approved Document if you prefer to meet the relevant requirement in some other way."

There is therefore, necessarily, room for discretion in the application of the requirements, though in most cases the guidance in the Approved Document is followed.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases there have been of enforcement action against builders for breaches of Part M of the Building Regulations in the last three years; and what the result of the enforcement action was in each case where proceedings are complete. [54198]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact on staffing levels in *(a)* public sector and *(b)* private sector building control bodies of the technical requirements of the building regulations due to come into effect on 6 April 2006. [53167]

Yvette Cooper: The impact on Building Control Bodies of the technical requirements of Part L of the building regulations due to come into effect in April 2006 was assessed in the draft Regulatory Impact Assessment published in 2004. Since then Building

Control Bodies have helped in refining the proposals and with developing our largest ever information campaign which got under way last July.

The changes in April 2006 will simplify procedures, encourage a more focussed approach to compliance checking and introduce new self-certification schemes. The information campaign aims to ensure that all building control people have the information they need. A final Regulatory Impact Assessment will be published when I lay the 2006 Statutory Instrument.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely effect on carbon dioxide emissions of domestic conservatory extensions being subject to planning permission and the concomitant energy efficiency standards; and if he will make a statement. [54998]

Yvette Cooper: Conservatories are subject to planning permission and have been for the last half a century. The Planning system does not set specific energy efficiency standards.

Circulars

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many circulars his Department issued to local authorities in each year since 1997, broken down by topic. [55773]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established on 29 May 2002, since then the ODPM has issued a total of 36 circulars. These are broken down as follows:

	2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*
Building	1	2	4	1	—
Housing	—	1	—	1	—
Local government	—	6	4	—	—
Planning	2	3	1	10	1

Civil Servants (Foreign Trips)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many foreign trips paid for by public funds his Department's civil servants have undertaken in each year since 1997. [56091]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was created following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The detailed information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel by ODPM staff is conducted in accordance with requirements of the Civil Service Management Code.

Concessionary Travel (Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding for the concessionary travel scheme has been allocated to Lancashire county council; what this represents as a percentage of the council's total budget; and whether this money is ringfenced. [57894]

Mr. Woolas: Concessionary travel is one of the services supplied by Shire district councils in two-tier areas.

It is not possible to calculate how much funding has been allocated to each district-level authority with respect to concessionary fares, since this is funded through an unhypothecated formula grant. This means that authorities are able to use the grant for any purpose. The total amount added to the RSG was £350 million which was distributed through the lower tier EPCS formula.

Correspondence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter of 20 December 2005 from the hon. Member for Aylesbury about the case of Mr. D. W. of Stokenchurch, Bucks. [58721]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The hon. Member's letter has been transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as it relates to issues which are the responsibility of that Department. DWP will therefore respond directly. I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay that occurred in transferring the letter.

Electoral Cycles

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has had discussions on changing the electoral cycles of the metropolitan districts in England. [58003]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is planning to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the summer.

Empty Properties

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* Ministerial colleagues and *(b)* others on empty publicly-owned residential properties. [57664]

Yvette Cooper: As announced in the Government's response to the Barker review of housing supply, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and HM Treasury have established a joint Taskforce to release more surplus public-sector land for housing development.

The intention is that the Taskforce, working with English Partnerships, will provide a comprehensive picture of surplus public sector landholdings, including sites that incorporate unoccupied residential properties.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Todd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what financial support his Department has made available to councils to improve energy efficiency within their properties. [56606]

Yvette Cooper: In 2004–05 local authorities reported in their BPSA returns that they spent £424 million on heating and insulation (either thermal or sound). The majority of this expenditure will come from funding provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Other work being carried out by local authorities, such as installing double glazed windows, will also improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

Government Office for London

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the running costs of the Government office for London were in each of the past four years. [59657]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Government office for London (GOL) running cost (admin) expenditure is as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	14.1
2003–04	16.7
2004–05	18.9
2005–06[1]	18.4

[1] The expenditure figure for 2005–06 reflects the anticipated end-year out-turn.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff were employed in the Government office for London in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2004–05. [59658]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government office for London staffing figures[1] from 2000 onwards are as follows:

[1] GOL staffing figures have been calculated as those staff (in staff units, not FTEs) working in GOL on GOL business paid for by GOL. These figures therefore do not include staff on outward secondment, outward loan, maternity leave, special leave and career breaks for whom we do not pay but who have a right of return to the organisation. Nor have we included those seconded into GOL who are paid for by their own employer.

As at April:	*Number*
2000	370
2001	240
2002	260
2003	288
2004	325
2005	308

Graffiti/Fly-posting

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what financial contributions the local authority in Swindon has sought under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to tackle graffiti and fly-posting. [54657]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not monitor agreements reached under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

High Hedges Act

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many remedial notices have been issued under the High Hedges Act 2001 since it came into force; and if he will make a statement. [59012]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The relevant provisions, in Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, came into force in England on 1 June 2005.

Home Information Packs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* home information packs and *(b)* home condition reports will be required for new-build residential properties on the market for the first time. [59124]

Yvette Cooper: New-build residential properties will require a Home Information Pack, giving potential buyers the key information they need up-front to make an informed decision about the purchase. However, regulations will specify that where a new home has an appropriate warranty which is uncommenced, a Home Condition Report will not be required in the Pack. ODPM intends to set out in the regulations the standard of warranty which will provide this exemption.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of home information packs which will be produced in each year once the scheme is fully operational. [49780]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1359W.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether home information packs will be required to contain information on whether the property is in an area of high flood risk. [56695]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has indicated the intention to include information about flood risk in the Home Information Pack, subject to the availability of a satisfactory search that provides robust, risk-based, and user friendly information that is property specific and avoids giving rise to unnecessary concerns and blight. The Environment Agency has produced a search that they believe meets these criteria and this is now being considered in consultation with colleagues in Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), key industry stakeholders and consumer representatives. The content of the home information pack will be set out in regulations to be made later this year.

Homelessness

Richard Burden: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2226W, on homelessness, if he will list the local authorities which will receive this support. [54844]

Yvette Cooper: All 354 borough and district councils in England will receive support from the £88 million in Homelessness Grants over 2006–07 and 2007–08. A table which lists the amounts that each local authority will receive has been made available in the Library of the House.

House Building (Staffordshire)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new homes he expects to be built in Staffordshire in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* each of the following three years. [53430]

Yvette Cooper: The regional spatial strategy for the west midlands sets out the levels and distribution of housing development for the region covering the period 2001–2021. Policy CF3 (and Table 1) set out annual rates of housing provision for strategic authorities in the west midlands. For Staffordshire the policy seeks to achieve annual average rates (which are to be applied as maxima) of 2,900 dwellings for 2006–07 and 2,500 for each of the following three years.

Households (Statistics)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2228W, what the average population is of each tier. [56129]

Yvette Cooper: The average population in each tier in England is as follows:

(a) District council (All local authorities excluding unitary local authorities, metropolitan councils and London boroughs)—97,000

(b) County council (all county councils excluding metropolitan councils)—738,000

(c) Unitary authorities (All unitary local authorities in England excluding London boroughs and metropolitan councils)—180,000

(d) Metropolitan council (all metropolitan council areas)—303,000

(e) London borough (all London boroughs including City of London)—224,000

Source:

ONS 2003 mid year estimated resident population estimates.

Housing

Mr. Spring: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty homes there were in Suffolk in each year since 1997. [56361]

Yvette Cooper: The number of vacant dwellings in Suffolk, from 1997 to 2004, is tabled as follows. These figures are the latest available data:

	Snapshot date	*Vacant dwellings*
1997	1 April	13,200
1998	1 April	11,500
1999	1 April	10,900
2000	1 April	8,900
2001	1 April	9,400
2002	1 November	9,100
2003	3November	9,500
2004	1 November	9,200

Source:

The figures for 1997 to 2001 are based on a combination of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return, and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR). For the years 2002 to 2004 the figures are based on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Council Tax Base 1 (CTB1) return.

These figures are for all vacant dwellings, including dwellings that have been empty for less than six months, some for less than one month. The Government are introducing new powers from April 2006 for local authorities to reduce the number of long-term empty homes in their area.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2234W, to the hon. Member for Brent East, on housing, what weighting is given in the *(a)* management and maintenance allowance and *(b)* major repairs allowance formulae to compensate local authorities in London for the costs associated with medium and high rise tower blocks. [57175]

Yvette Cooper: The detailed calculations of both management and maintenance allowances and major repairs allowance (including archetype weightings) are set out in the commentary on the 2006–07 Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Determination. A copy of this is available in the Library of the House or on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

(a) Management allowances take into account the proportion of high and medium rise flats in a local authority. The greater is an authority's proportion of high and medium rise flats, the greater the management allowance per dwelling in that authority.

Maintenance allowances are calculated assuming a level of responsive repairs, planned works, basic works for relets and terminations, crime related work to voids. Each of these items of work is assumed to take a different cost depending on the dwelling type it is associated with. The stock mix of an authority therefore determines their maintenance subsidy entitlement.

(b) The calculation of the major repairs allowance (MRA) takes into account the stock mix of dwellings within an individual local authority. Each of 13 different archetypes attracts a different level of MRA.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council houses have been sold under the right-to-buy scheme in Milton Keynes each year since 1998. [54670]

Yvette Cooper: The number of council houses sold in Milton Keynes under the right-to-buy scheme in each year since 1998–99 as reported by Milton Keynes can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/383/Table648Excel545Kb_id1156383.xls Information is only available for the years shown.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty homes there were in *(a)* the Milton Keynes unitary authority area and *(b)* South East England in each of the last 10 years. [54671]

Yvette Cooper: The number of vacant dwellings in Milton Keynes unitary authority area and South East England, from 1995 to 2004, is tabled as follows. These figures are the latest available data:

	Snapshot date	*Milton Keynes*	*South East*
1995	1 April	4,002	107,800
1996	1 April	[1]—	106,500
1997	1 April	[1]—	100,000
1998	1 April	2,246	95,000
1999	1 April	2,712	94,800
2000	1 April	1,128	87,100

	Snapshot date	Milton Keynes	South East
2001	1 April	2,259	86,700
2002	1 November	2,016	101,400
2003	3 November	2,003	100,800
2004	1 November	2,051	98,800

[1] No figure supplied.

Source:

The figures for 1995 to 2001 are based on a combination of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return, and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR). For the years 2002 to 2004 the figures are based on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Council Tax Base 1 (CTB1) return.

These figures are for all vacant dwellings, including dwellings that have been empty for less than six months, some for less than one month. The Government are introducing new powers from April 2006 for local authorities to reduce the number of long-term empty homes in their area.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on alternatives to housing stock transfer as a method for strategic investment in council housing. [53340]

Yvette Cooper: Where local authorities require additional resources to meet the decent homes target, they can opt to establish an arms length management organisation (ALMO) or private finance initiative (PFI) scheme, as an alternative to transferring their stock. Where authorities can meet the target through their own resources they can opt to retain their stock.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* council houses and *(b)* flats are owned by each local authority. [58939]

Yvette Cooper: A table with the requested data has been deposited in the House Library. The table shows the number of houses (including bungalows) and the number of flats owned by each local authority at 1 April 2005, as reported on the audited base data return forms that LAs complete in order to claim Housing Revenue Account Subsidy. The table includes shared ownership and PFI dwellings.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council houses in *(a)* Sunderland city council and *(b)* Houghton and Washington, East constituency (i) have been brought up to the decent homes standard and (ii) remain to be brought up to that standard. [57685]

Yvette Cooper: Sunderland city council transferred all of its housing stock to six Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in 2001.

In 2002 these RSLs reported that they had 23,000 homes which failed the Decent Homes standard. In 2005 they reported that only 43 were non-decent. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold data on non-decency at a constituency level.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much grant was used by housing associations to buy land for key worker housing in each of the last five years. [55767]

Yvette Cooper: Grant funding is provided to housing associations to deliver housing and is not provided specifically in relation to land costs and construction costs. The following table details the amount of grant provided to housing associations to develop new build homes for key workers over the last five years.

£

	Starter Home Initiative	Challenge Fund	Key working living
2000–01	0	0	0
2001–02	112,609	0	0
2002–03	6,262,914	0	0
2003–04	17,548,536	158,502,207	0
2004–05	246,116	4,055,218	231,985,257

Note:

Key worker figures for Challenge Fund assumed to be 50 per cent. of total Challenge Fund approvals

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what data he collects on the size of new homes. [55769]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities do not supply information on the size of new build completions. The National House Building Council, however, provides information on whether the new dwelling is a house or flat and the number of bedrooms. The NHBC report on around 50 per cent. of new build completions in England therefore this data enables an estimate to be made of proportions of total completions by type and number of bedrooms. This information for England and the regions is published in statistical tables 251 and 252 on the ODPM website. http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1156032

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of new homes to be built in Wellingborough constituency over the next 15 years. [56670]

Yvette Cooper: The Secretary of State my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's policy on development in Northamptonshire is set out in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy, which was published in March 2005. This document sets out the future housing provision for local authority areas for the period 2001–21. The hon. Member's constituency covers the borough council of Wellingborough and part of East Northamptonshire district council. The level of housing provision within the Wellingborough local authority area over the next 15 years (2006–21) is set at 9,825 new dwellings. The level of housing provision within the East Northamptonshire local authority area over the next 15 years (2006–21) is set at 6,800 new dwellings.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what projection he has made of the proportion of the budgeted social housing grant which will be spent in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [55776]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation provides regular forecasts to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and has estimated that around 98 per cent. of its budget for social housing grant will be spent in 2005–06.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether unspent local authority funds for social housing may be transferred to shared ownership programmes. [55777]

Yvette Cooper: There are no barriers to local authorities using their own funding to provide social housing and low cost home ownership schemes. This is a matter for local authorities to decide.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of new social housing is *(a)* built to and *(b)* easily adapted to the high wheelchair standard. [56285]

Yvette Cooper: In 2004–05, 8 per cent. of new social housing units in schemes approved as part of the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Programme in England, were built to the high wheelchair standard. Information is not available on housing that can be adapted to the high wheelchair standard.

Housing Benefit

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research he has undertaken on the views of registered social landlords on the removal of housing benefit from tenants who engage in antisocial behaviour. [55689]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not undertaken any research on this subject to date.

Housing Corporation

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Government's plans to merge the Housing Corporation with English Partnerships. [56100]

Yvette Cooper: No decision has been taken to merge the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believes both organisations are doing important, valuable and complementary work.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will make public the results of his Department's discussions with the Local Government Association on additional financial assistance for local authorities to cover the costs associated with *(a)* licensing, *(b)* asylum-seekers, *(c)* pensions and *(d)* disposal of electrical equipment; and if he will make a statement. [57460]

Mr. Woolas: Under the new burdens doctrine the Government are committed to ensuring the net additional costs of new policies are covered. The outcome of the joint work with the Local Government Association to look at the pressures councils face, and the ways central and local government can manage those pressures, was announced in the statement to the House on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's proposals for the funding of local authority revenue spending in 2006–07 and 2007–08 on 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 627WS. This included extra formula grant for the two years over and above previous plans of £305 million and £508 million for local government, and a commitment to the new burdens procedure.

In that statement, it was reiterated that the cost pressures arising from the temporary reinstatement of the 85 year rule in the local government pension scheme will not fall on taxpayers; and the Government's commitment that costs to local authorities from meeting their requirements under the new Licensing Act will be fully met by fees within the national fee regime, provided they are incurred legitimately and efficiently.

Parliament has now approved the ODPM proposals and the Local Government Finance Settlement provides for an overall increase in Government grant of 4.5 per cent. and 5 per cent. over the next two years.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2239W to the hon. Member for Brent, East (Sarah Teather) on local government finance, how much each local authority in England was paid in service debt charges in each year since 1997. [57172]

Yvette Cooper: I have arranged for the information to be made available in the Library of the House detailing the value of each authority's Housing Revenue Account Subsidy entitlement for debt charges. The data for 2005–06 has not yet been audited and should be considered preliminary data only and subject to change.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2239W, to the hon. Member for Brent, East, on local government finance, what the local authority allowances for management, maintenance and major repairs were in each year since 1997; and what the *(a)* service debt charges and *(b)* rental income paid to local authorities were in each year in the same period. [57174]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is tabled as follows; the major repairs allowance was introduced on 1 April 2001:

£

Financial year	*Management and maintenance allowances*	*Major repairs allowance*	*Debt charges*	*Rental income*
1997–98	3,305,129,205	n/a	2,205,198,847	6,203,623,481
1998–99	3,222,794,448	n/a	2,136,542,900	6,215,605,975
1999–2000	3,140,141,485	n/a	2,012,611,835	6,158,111,546
2000–01	3,058,973,906	n/a	1,923,747,474	6,089,846,505
2001–02	2,962,262,674	1,586,912,234	1,810,651,777	6,005,789,010
2002–03	2,983,786,673	1,528,961,056	1,669,557,784	5,940,056,612
2003–04	2,970,858,979	1,456,159,167	1,531,423,203	5,815,614,233
2004–05	3,081,806,590	1,389,402,322	1,204,841,327	5,721,590,235
2005–06	3,221,049,641	1,357,445,827	1,175,683,667	5,721,729,048

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the 2006–07 local government settlement for the London Borough of Bexley. [59656]

Mr. Woolas: The London borough of Bexley submitted two written representations during the consultation period on the provisional local government settlement for 2006–07; one on a range of issues and one specifically on the subject of school capital allocations.

Mayors

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to review the legislation which introduced directly elected mayors. [56359]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is planning to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the summer.

Milton Keynes Partnerships

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2241W, on Milton Keynes Partnership, what the levels of remuneration are for each member of Milton Keynes Partnerships. [56841]

Yvette Cooper: The remuneration details per annum for members of the Milton Keynes Partnership are as follows:

£

Voting member	*Representing*	*Remunerated*
Sir Bob Reid	Independent	35,864
Anne Limb	Independent	7,813
Cllr Isobel McCall	Milton Keynes Council	7,813
Cllr Euan Henderson	Milton Keynes Council	7,813
Cllr Roger Bristow	Milton Keynes Council	7,813
Wendy Lehmann	Voluntary organisations	7,813
Malcolm Brighton	Health sector	7,813
Andrew Peck	Business community	7,813
Dr. Pauline Lane	English Partnerships	[1]—
Dennis Hone	English Partnerships	[1]—

[1] No.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when district councils were informed of the annual roll-out indicative plans of mobile telephone operators for mast erection in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [59670]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Since 2001, during September and October, each year the mobile network operators individually wrote to every local authority with details of their network roll-out for the year ahead.

However, in 2005, the operators collaborated to send combined network development plans from a single source; this happened on 27 October. We understand that this will be their continued practice in future years.

Parish Councils

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average length of time taken by his Department to process a parish council application from submission to final approval was in 2004–05. [58514]

Mr. Woolas: The average length of time taken to process a parish council application by petition from submission to an order being made establishing a new parish in 2004–05 was nine months.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons a final decision has yet to be reached on the parish council application from the South Lathom Residents Association. [58581]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the explanation provided in my reply of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2832W. I understand the Electoral Commission has still to receive information from West Lancashire district council on their consultation about the electoral arrangements for the proposed parish of Lathom South.

It appears that the district council has now consulted on this matter with local government electors in the proposed parish. Once the Electoral Commission has obtained details about the electoral arrangements of the proposed parish from the district council they will be able to provide advice to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and we can make a final decision about this application.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department follows on the length of time during which consultation on electoral arrangements for parish council applications should be conducted. [58583]

Mr. Woolas: None. The responsibility for electoral arrangements for parish council reviews and petitions applications lies with the Electoral Commission. It is for them to determine any guidance on such arrangements.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what date the application for a parish council from the South Lathom Residents Association was submitted to his Department. [58584]

Mr. Woolas: The petition for a parish council for Lathom South was sent to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by West Lancashire district council on 20 October 2003.

Pathfinder

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total estimated expenditure is on the Pathfinder programme. [56098]

Yvette Cooper: By end of March 2008 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will have invested £1.2 billion in housing market renewal grant. Funding beyond that will depend on the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Planning

Mr. Malins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications for isolated houses in the countryside under the provisions of paragraph 11 of planning policy statement 7 have been referred to him as departures from the provisions of the development plan; how many have been called in by him for determination; and how many have been *(a)* approved and *(b)* refused. [59161]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Since PPS7 was published, two cases have been referred to the First Secretary of State, both of which have been called-in:

(a) In September 2004, the First Secretary of State called-in a proposal for an isolated dwelling in Coston, Leicestershire. In his decision letter of 13 March 2006, the First Secretary of State granted planning permission for this proposal; and

(b) In December 2004, the First Secretary of State called-in a proposal for an isolated dwelling at Hurstbourne Priors Quarry, Hampshire. The inquiry into this case finished on 18 January 2006, and the proposal is currently under consideration by the Secretary of State. The statutory target for deciding this case is 10 May 2006.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many appeals have been submitted to the planning inspectorate against the decision of a local planning authority to refuse planning permission for isolated houses in the countryside as provided for in planning policy statement 7; and how many of these have been allowed. [59162]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The information is not recorded centrally and cannot be provided without disproportionate costs.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the revision of planning policy guidance has changed the situation with regard to gaining permission for the building of domestic units on former airfields. [55018]

Yvette Cooper: No. The proposed changes reflected in annex A of draft planning policy statement 3: 'Housing' (PPS3), published for consultation in December 2005, were not intended to affect the application of the definition of previously-developed land to former airfields. Specifically they do not seek to change policy in relation to the development of former airfield sites for housing.

The consultation period for responses to draft PPS3 closed on 27 February. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will take into account consultation responses on this matter in finalising PPS3.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning *(a)* guidance and *(b)* regulations apply to (i) building new schools and (ii) expanding existing schools. [54534]

Yvette Cooper: Decisions on planning applications are taken by the local planning authority in the first instance, having regard to relevant policies in the development plan in accordance with section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

There is a range of national planning guidance, principally set out in the Government's planning policy statements (PPS) and planning policy guidance notes (PPG), which may apply to the construction or expansion of schools in varying circumstances. For example, the policies in PPG2, 'Green Belts', will apply to schools in the green belt. More specifically, paragraph 27(v) of PPS1, 'Delivering Sustainable Development', advises planning authorities in preparing their development plans to seek to provide improved access for all to education, as well as to other services and facilities, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access these facilities without having to rely on the car. (PPS and PPG are available under the planning section of the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at www.odpm.gov.uk).

The regulatory provisions in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and in relevant secondary planning legislation have a general applicability, including to school development. Part 32 of schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order 1995 grants schools the right to expand floorspace by 10 per cent., in certain circumstances, without the need to submit a planning application.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many hectares of previously developed land in the Thames Gateway are *(a)* available for building on and *(b)* expected to become available in the future. [54709]

Yvette Cooper: The information available is from the National Land Use Database of Previously-Developed Land. This shows a total of 2,790 hectares of previously-developed vacant or derelict land in the Thames Gateway policy area in 2004, and 4,510 hectares currently in use with planning permission or allocation in a local plan for redevelopment, or otherwise known to be available for redevelopment.

Renewable Energy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he took the decision to postpone his Department's plans to consult on a code for sustainable buildings; and for what reasons. [54065]

Yvette Cooper: The consultation document on the code for sustainable homes was published as planned on 5 December 2005. Consultation closed on 6 March 2006.

Residential Accommodation (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for tackling overcrowding in residential accommodation in Peterborough; and if he will make a statement. [53805]

Yvette Cooper: Peterborough city council is addressing the issue of overcrowding in a number of ways: working with housing associations to provide more new affordable housing through the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing Programme, exploring the feasibility of bringing long-term empty houses back in to use and providing advice to residents on the most appropriate housing options available.

The Government have doubled its investment in social housing from 1997 levels, and the Housing Corporation has taken steps to encourage investment in larger homes through its National Affordable Housing Programme. The full details of the Housing Corporation's programme of social housing investment over the next two years for every region will be announced shortly.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises that overcrowding causes serious problems for families. I announced on 8 March the Government's intention to consult this year on raising the statutory overcrowding standards, which were set in 1935. In addition the Government believes we need to build more homes across the board to tackle long-term pressures of overcrowding. The Government are supporting new homes for Peterborough.

Residential House Boats

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he proposes to make a statement on the status of residential house boats following his recent public consultation on the options. [54716]

Yvette Cooper: We will publish our response to the representations made on the consultation paper about security of tenure for residential boats by 16 May 2006.

Right to Buy (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many right-to-buy completions there were in Peterborough in each year since 1996–97. [54857]

Yvette Cooper: The number of council houses sold in Peterborough under the right-to-buy scheme in each year since 1998–99 as reported by Peterborough can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at:(http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/383/Table648Excel545Kb_idl156383.xls). Information is only available for the years shown.

Shared Home Ownership

Mr. Leech: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to introduce a shared home ownership scheme for key workers outside the South East of England. [54704]

Yvette Cooper: The Key Worker Living programme is a specific scheme focused on helping key workers in London, the East and the South East of England and there are currently no plans to extend it. All regional housing boards were asked to advise Ministers on the allocation of resources to their region for the 2006–08 funding period including whether they would like to recommend allocating a percentage of their resources to specifically help key workers. Only London, the East and the South East have done so.

However, from April 2006, key workers are one of the eligible groups for all other Government funded low cost home ownership schemes alongside social tenants, those on the housing register and priority first time buyers recommended by regional housing boards around the country. 50 per cent. of homes provided through the First Time Buyers Initiative, being delivered by English Partnerships, which includes areas outside the South East will also be available for key workers. Information on which Government funded low cost home ownership schemes can be accessed by key workers in each area will be available from the local zone agent, contact details for which will be available on ODPM's website www.odpm.gov.uk from April 2006.

Sustainable Buildings

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he expects the Code for Sustainable Buildings to be progressively incorporated into building regulations. [54683]

Yvette Cooper: The Code for Sustainable Homes will continue to be underpinned by building regulations and will form the basis for the next wave of improvements to building regulations.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to facilitate the greater use of new materials, techniques and designs in new house building. [54710]

Yvette Cooper: Building Regulations are based on functional requirements which specify outcomes, not materials or processes. It is open to designers and builders to use different approaches to achieve compliance and adopt innovative materials, techniques and designs to meet the needs of specific projects.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also works with the house building and construction industry, and our agencies English Partnerships, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the Housing Corporation, to explore and facilitate development and greater take-up of new approaches where they have proved practicable. Examples include involvement in recent work by the Home Builders Federation to produce a report "An examination of the barriers to greater use of modern methods of construction in the house building industry and the mechanisms to, overcome them", published earlier this month.

With the Housing Corporation we have also worked with the National Audit Office to develop the evidence base on costs and benefits of different approaches to modern construction, and provide guidance to the industry on the best approach to their use. This report was published in November last year.

The ODPM also encourages new approaches through demonstrations and competitions, such "Design for Manufacture" which is challenging the industry to produce cost-effective homes without sacrificing quality. Later this year we will be publishing a document on the lessons learnt from the competition.

Telecommunications (Cambridgeshire)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* telecommunication base stations and *(b)* mobile phone masts have been located in (i) the parliamentary constituency of Peterborough and (ii) the county of Cambridgeshire in each year since 1997. [54892]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. You may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what data the Government collects on the proportion of types of new homes being built in the Thames Gateway. [50201]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) collects information on new build houses by tenure based upon building control data provided by local authorities and the National House-Building Council (NHBC). Local authority level information is published on the ODPM website.

The NHBC data provide type and size of houses but these cover only a proportion of all dwellings built and estimates are published at regional level only.

Town and Country Planning Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of the Town and Country Planning (Major Infrastructure Project Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2002; [54302]

(2) what recent representations he has received regarding enforcement of Circular 2002 Planning Inquiries for Major Infrastructure Projects procedures; and if he will make a statement. [54303]

Yvette Cooper: On 24 August 2004, the 2002 rules were superseded by Statutory Instrument 2005 No.2115 Town and Country Planning (Major Infrastructure Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules. Supporting guidance was issued in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 07/2005.

Changes have been made to speed up the processes. The new procedure rules allow front loading of the procedures at pre-inquiry stage to enable major participants and the lead inspector to narrow down the issues which will need examination once the inquiry starts. There are improvements to inquiry procedures to allow stricter timetabling, round table sessions, reduced reading of proofs, better management by the inspectors of cross examination and for a team of inspectors to hear concurrent sessions instead of everything being dealt with sequentially in front of one inspector.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* section 100 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, *(b)* Article 20(5) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 and *(c)* the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. [54305]

Yvette Cooper: The Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has power, under s100 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to revoke or modify a planning permission granted by a local planning authority. Revocation or modification can only be made before a planning permission is implemented. However, the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will generally use this power only if the original decision is judged to be grossly wrong, so that damage is likely to be done to the wider public interest.

Article 20(5) of the Procedure Order gives people time to comment on planning applications received by the local planning authority. In most cases they have 21 days from the date when the authority publicises the application in order to make representations.

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 provided the public and elected members with new rights of access to information about the policies and practices of local authorities and some other public bodies, in order to reinforce their accountability. It also opened up authorities' meetings to the public and the press.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the study commissioned by his Department, A Review of the Publicity Requirements for Planning Applications. [54306]

Yvette Cooper: Current publicity requirements for planning applications are explained in Circular 15/92, which is on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.odpm.gov.uk. There are no immediate plans to adopt the recommendations made by consultants Arup in the report to which the hon. Member refers.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the operation of the Town and Country Planning (Determination of Appeals by Appointed Persons) (Prescribed Classes) Regulations 1997. [54308]

Yvette Cooper: These regulations:

> prescribe the classes of appeal which are to be determined by persons appointed by the Secretary of State (in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 6 to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Schedule 3 to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) instead of being determined by the Secretary of State;
>
> prescribe certain classes of case within those prescribed classes of appeal which are to continue to be determined by the Secretary of State;
>
> and provide for publication by local planning authorities of any direction made by the Secretary of State specifying classes of case within the prescribed classes of appeal which are to be determined by the Secretary of State.

The Government will shortly consult on whether planning and enforcement appeals in relation to Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings continue to be determined by the Secretary of State in all cases, or by persons appointed by the Secretary of State in some cases.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the operation of Schedule 6 paragraph 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. [54309]

Yvette Cooper: Schedule 6 paragraph 3 sets out the provisions which allow the Secretary of State to recover appeals which would otherwise be dealt with by an inspector. The recovery criteria are set out in the *Official Report*, 25 July 2000 (column 594W). However, most planning appeals are transferred to the Planning Inspectorate for inspectors to decide on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the operation of the Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000. [54310]

Yvette Cooper: These rules regulate the procedure to be followed in connection with local inquiries in England held by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister before he determines applications referred to him, or appeals made to him, in relation to planning permission, listed building consent and consent for the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas.

Unitary Development Plan

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local planning authorities do not have in place an *(a)* adopted and *(b)* revised replacement unitary development plan. [57999]

Yvette Cooper: Under the old system of development plans, 72 local planning authorities had responsibility for the preparation of a unitary development plan; there is only one authority who is still working towards the adoption of its first unitary development plan.

Of the 71 adopted unitary development plans, 37 made provision for the period up to 2001 and were not revised under the old development plan system. Of the remaining 34 plans, 20 make provision for the period up until 2006; five to 2011 and nine to 2016.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004) enables for the policies contained in adopted unitary development plans to be "saved" for a period of at least three years from commencement of the Act or three years from the adoption of a unitary development plan if that is after commencement. The PCPA 2004 also makes the Regional Spatial Strategy part of the development plan which, together with the new local development framework (LDF) that includes the "saved" unitary development plan policies, provides the framework for planning in local authority's area. All 72 authorities are now working up their LDFs.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report,* column 587W, (1) on the Valuation Office Agency, how many claims for compensation the Agency has received since 1997; and what the result of the claim was in each case; [46997]

(2) on the Valuation Office Agency, how many claims for compensation have been made against the Agency since May 1997. [48162]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Claims are extremely rare and no separate record is kept.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Valuation Office Agency spent on foreign visits in each year in the last five years; and if he will list the location and purpose of each foreign visit. [47148]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles) on 28 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 685W.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) of 20 January 2006, *Official Report,* column 1699W, on the Valuation Office Agency, from what date the Valuation Office Agency has had access to data held in the National Register of Social Housing. [50911]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The Valuation Office Agency does not have direct access to the National Register of Social Housing (NRoSH) database. A list of addresses of properties on the National Register was supplied to the VOA, in electronic format, on 2 March 2005.

Wind Farms

Dr. Francis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he issues to local planning authorities on the siting of wind farms on or near *(a)* national parks and *(b)* areas of outstanding natural beauty. [55197]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend on 28 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 626W.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Dangerous/Careless Driving

Mr. Bone: To ask the Solicitor-General what criteria are used by the Crown Prosecution Service in distinguishing between a case of *(a)* dangerous and *(b)* careless driving where someone is killed. [58970]

The Solicitor-General: Crown Prosecutors apply the Code for Crown Prosecutors in every case to decide if there is sufficient evidence of *(a)* dangerous driving or *(b)* careless driving. What amounts to sufficient evidence will vary according to the facts and circumstances of each case, and the fact of a death, while a very important factor, is not determinative of dangerousness or carelessness in any case. National charging standards exist to assist prosecutors to make consistent and appropriate decisions according to the evidence in each case.

Dangerous driving can range from a prolonged and deliberate course of driving with disregard for safety of other road users to a single but serious misjudgment. Typically, careless driving will consist of more minor errors or misjudgements. In deciding between the offences, prosecutors must take into account the manner of the driving and the circumstances in which the driving took place when deciding how far the driving departed from the required standard. To prove a charge of causing death by dangerous driving, the law requires the prosecution to show that the driving fell far below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver and it would be obvious to a competent and careful driver that driving in that way was dangerous. To prove careless driving it is necessary for the prosecution to establish that the driving fell below that of a reasonable, prudent and competent driver.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Solicitor-General when he will review the operation of magistrates courts with regard to delays in cases being heard by magistrates, with particular reference to Peterborough magistrates' court; and if she will make a statement. [57191]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Her Majesty's Court Service is working with the Crown Prosecution Service to improve arrangements so that cases in the magistrates courts are dealt with speedily and efficiently with just outcomes.

The primary cause of delays at Peterborough is the increase in cases being brought to court. A strategy has been drawn up to handle the increasing workload at Peterborough which will include the assistance of a District Judge (magistrates courts) from April 2006.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Criminal Cases (Competitive Tendering)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2045W, when she will publish the research into the impact on ethnic minorities of competitive tendering. [59033]

Ms Harman: The report to which the hon. Member refers has not yet been finalised. The Legal Services Commission intends to publish it in due course.

Criminal Court (Salaried Defenders)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 3 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1005W, if she will place in the Library a copy of the PKF report prepared as part of Lord Carter's review. [59031]

Ms Harman: The PKF report to Lord Carter of Coles, has not yet been completed. PKF is undertaking some further research in conjunction with Otterburn Legal Consultancy. The combined research will be published in due course.

Legal Aid

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 3 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1007W, if she will place in the Library a summary of the Frontier Economics research. [59032]

Ms Harman: Frontier Economics is providing ongoing economic expertise to Lord Carter on a consultancy basis. Frontier has not undertaken any specific research as part of Lord Carter's independent review of legal aid procurement.

Parental Access

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many parents have court-ordered access arrangements that allow main contact with their children only *(a)* at weekends and *(b)* on Sundays. [58074]

Bridget Prentice: The IT systems in the courts do not allow for collection of details, which are entered in narrative form, on to each contact order, thus the Government cannot routinely collect data such as frequency and timing of contact as ordered by the courts.

From the ONS Omnibus survey 2003, responses suggested that around 30 per cent. of contact arrangements ordered by the court resulted in direct contact at least once per week.

The Government would like better data about what orders for contact are made, and the related issues of what parents seek from an order, what evidence is brought before the court and what arguments are employed in the decision making process. During the passage of the Children and Adoption Bill, the Government undertook to commission research on what happens between a contact case coming to court and a final order being made, including the frequency and duration of contact in the final order and any interim orders made. This project is now being commissioned and it is expected that it will take about 18 months to carry out.

Polling Stations

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many polling stations for local government elections in 2006 will be accessible for disabled people; and how many will be in *(a)* caravans and *(b)* other temporary structures. [58413]

Ms Harman: This information is not held centrally. It is for the relevant local authority to designate their own polling stations, and to keep these under review to ensure that, as far as possible, they are accessible to the local community, including voters with disabilities.

The Electoral Administration Bill will extend the duty to review polling places. Under clause 20, a local authority will have to carry out a full review at least every four years, and appeals can be made to the Electoral Commission.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Africa (Good Governance)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of *(a)* Mozambique, *(b)* Kenya, *(c)* Nigeria and *(d)* Angola regarding (i) good governance and (ii) corruption. [58820]

Ian Pearson: We maintain a close dialogue with Mozambique on good governance and corruption under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding governing cooperation between Mozambique and the group of 18 direct budget support donors. This sets out as key underlying principles a continuing commitment to democracy, good governance and the rule of law.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development, discussed efforts to tackle corruption and promote good governance in Kenya with President Kibaki on 17 January 2006.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed a range of issues with President Obasanjo and other senior Nigerians during his visit to Nigeria 13–15 February, including issues of good governance and corruption.

We also maintain a close dialogue with Angola on good governance and corruption, which includes its programme of activities to increase budgetary transparency, particularly in the area of oil revenue management.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of *(a)* Equatorial Guinea, *(b)* Saŏ Tomé, *(c)* Congo-Brazzaville, *(d)* Gabon and *(e)* Madagascar regarding (i) good governance and (ii) corruption. [58843]

Ian Pearson: Our outgoing non-resident ambassador to Equatorial Guinea made his farewell call on President Obiang on 5 December 2005, and they discussed governance issues, particularly in relation to electoral reform. We encourage the Government of Equatorial Guinea to take steps to tackle corruption within the country and to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Our non-resident ambassador to Sao Tome and Principe presented his credentials to President Fradique de Menezes on 5 December 2005, and discussed the conclusions of the Commission for Africa, which include promoting good governance and tackling corruption.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met President Sassou-Nguesso on 27 February 2006. They discussed the need to create an environment conducive for successful development in Africa. Our ambassador in Kinshasa, who is accredited to the Republic of Congo, works with EU partners to encourage the Congolese Government to address governance and corruption issues.

Our ambassador designate to Gabon met the Gabonese ambassador in London in February 2006 and encouraged Gabon to pursue good governance, transparency and respect for human rights.

Our former ambassador to Madagascar repeatedly promoted good governance and anti-corruption during his tenure, which ended in August 2005. Our ambassador-designate has not yet been invited to present his credentials to the Government of Madagascar.

Bangladesh

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Bangladesh Government on levels of politically-inspired violence; and if he will ensure the UK participates in monitoring elections there due at the end of the year. [59038]

Dr. Howells: We maintain a regular dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh on political and extremist violence. I raised these issues in detail during my visit to Bangladesh in November 2005. On 7 March, I issued a statement, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House, welcoming the arrests of alleged extremist leaders including Siddiqul Islam, and Abdur Rahman and the need to deal with terrorism and extremism in a sustained and effective way while respecting human rights and the rule of law. I also discussed these developments with Saifur Rahman, the Finance Minister of Bangladesh in London on 8 March.

More broadly, on the elections due in Bangladesh by January 2007, we continue to urge the Government and the opposition to engage in constructive dialogue on the key steps to ensure a level playing field, and free and fair and peaceful elections with full participation. The Government of Bangladesh welcome international election monitoring and we are considering with EU partners an EU election observation mission to Bangladesh and other potential assistance.

Chechnya

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports of mass poisonings at schools in the Shelkovsk district of Chechnya. [58845]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The exact causes of the illness affecting a number of children and adults in Chechnya remain unclear. There is insufficient verifiable information to make an independent assessment of the situation. Russian Press reports refer to 93 cases, mostly in schoolgirls from Shelkovsk but some also in Grozny and Urus Martan. They have displayed a variety of symptoms, particularly neurological, spasms and fits, and respiratory, breathing difficulties and nosebleeds. The Russian authorities have sent experts in toxicology and forensic psychiatry from Moscow to the region. They consider that those affected are suffering from a form of hysteria associated with the extreme and chronic stress of the Chechen conflict and its aftermath. Some non-governmental organisations in the region assess there is a toxic cause. We understand that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has experience of a similar incident involving Albanian schoolchildren in Macedonia in 2002. After investigating that incident they found no evidence of poisoning and concluded that a form of mass hysteria was a plausible explanation. The WHO has not been asked for assistance in this case but remains in contact with the Chechen authorities. We continue to monitor these cases closely.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the appointment of Ramzan Kadyrov as prime minister of Chechnya; and what assessment he has made of the implications of the appointment for *(a)* the transition to democracy and *(b)* respect for human rights. [58846]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Ramzan Kadyrov's appointment raises concerns in light of reports that Chechen security forces under his control have committed human rights abuses in Chechnya. This is an issue we have raised with the Russian authorities both in bilateral and EU/Russia human rights consultations, most recently during the latest round of the EU/Russia consultations in Vienna on 3 March. Ramzan Kadyrov's appointment followed soon after the visit to the region, in February this year, of UN high commissioner for human rights, Louise Arbour. Following that visit, President Putin confirmed to high commissioner Arbour Russia's readiness to put into practice her recommendations, including those on the situation in the North Caucasus. Given the influential role of the Federal authorities in Moscow in Chechen affairs and political appointments, we would want to see this commitment positively influencing Mr. Kadyrov's premiership, both in terms of respect for human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

Child Trafficking

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of India regarding tackling *(a)* child trafficking and *(b)* the child sex industry. [58806]

Dr. Howells: The most recent discussions with the Indian Government on the issue of child trafficking were held when the UK, as presidency of the European Union, raised this issue during discussions on child labour during a human rights dialogue with Indian Government officials in Delhi on 1 December.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office funded a National Criminal Intelligence Service Foundation course in understanding child sex offenders for Indian police and non-governmental organisations working on child rights. The course took place in February 2006 in Goa, Maharashtra State.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect on the security situation in Democratic Republic of Congo of militia activity associated with the cross-border conflict with Rwanda; and if he will make a statement. [59468]

Ian Pearson: The security situation remains fragile in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), particularly in Ituri and the Kivus. The UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC has carried out joint operations with Congolese military to disrupt the activities of foreign armed groups, including Rwandan Hutu militias. But these groups continue to persecute civilians. There are no recent indications of cross-border conflict with Rwanda or any of the DRC's neighbours.

We continue to urge regional governments to work together to resolve the issue of the foreign armed groups and to respect all states' territorial integrity. The recent UN Security Council Resolution 1653 reinforced this message. And the US-facilitated Tripartite Plus mechanism provides a forum for disputes to be resolved diplomatically.

Ecuadorian Airspace

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the governments of (i) Ecuador and (ii) Colombia concerning the alleged incursions by Colombian military planes into Ecuadorian airspace since November 2005; what assessment his Department has made of the implications; and if he will make a statement. [59589]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We are aware of the incidents in question. Our ambassador in Bogota discussed the alleged incursions by Colombian military planes into Ecuadorian airspace with the Colombian Minister of Defence at the time of the incident. The Colombians informed us that they intended to investigate the alleged incursions. Our embassy in Quito has not discussed this issue with the Ecuadorian Government. We consider this to be a bilateral issue between the two governments and hope that, in the interest of preserving regional stability, they will be able to resolve the matter amicably.

EU Flag

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what *(a)* circumstances and *(b)* rules the EU flag is flown from official UK diplomatic premises in (i) EU member states and (ii) non-EU countries; and in what ways the relevant rules or guidance have been amended over the last 10 years. [57796]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Our overseas missions may fly the EU flag at their discretion, but only alongside the British diplomatic, consular or, in Commonwealth countries, Union flag with the British flag having precedence, and only where circumstances (e.g. local custom and protocol) permit.

Last year, before the UK's EU presidency, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued guidance to our overseas missions on flying the EU flag during the presidency. UK missions in EU countries were asked to fly the EU flag, but only where the existence of a second flag pole allowed it to be flown alongside the Union flag. UK missions in non-EU countries were encouraged to fly the EU flag where local circumstances permitted.

In 2004, guidance was issued decreeing that, where flown, the EU flag would be half-masted whenever the Union flag was half-masted.

Forced Sterilisations (India)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with the Government of India on forced sterilisations in that country; and if he will make a statement. [59293]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have not held any recent discussions with the Government of India on this issue. However, the India country office of the Department for International Development had discussions with the Government of India on population stabilisation issues in February 2006, in the context of the multi-donor review mission of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme, phase-2.

India is currently a member of the Commission on the Status of Women and has signed the Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. The Convention is the only human rights treaty, which affirms the reproductive rights of women. Under the convention India has an international obligation to promote this issue.

G8

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of the case for expanding the G8 to include India. [58826]

Dr. Howells: Invitations to non-G8 leaders to attend G8 summits are made at the discretion of the rotating Presidency. As part of outreach at the Gleneagles summit, the UK invited the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to discuss the global economy and climate change.

Guatemala

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that death squads are operating in Guatemala. [58823]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Human Rights situation in Guatemala has improved since the 36-year civil war was brought to a close in 1996 by the Peace Accords. However, we have serious concerns about growing organised crime, the activities of gangs, called maras, and the impact of these developments on the human rights situation in the country. Our embassy in Guatemala City works closely with human rights organisations to substantiate reports of human rights abuses. We actively raise awareness of cases with the Guatemalan authorities, particularly attacks on human rights defenders and the increasing violence against women. We press for all incidents to be investigated thoroughly.

Human Trafficking

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the use of Osh as a transit hub for human traffickers in Central Asia; and if he will make a statement. [59596]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We read with concern a report in April 2005 by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on People Trafficking in Central Asia which suggested that Osh, in Kyrgyzstan, appeared to be a focal point for human trafficking in the region. Given the clandestine nature of human trafficking, it is difficult to identify with certainty the routes used by human traffickers, but the limited evidence available to us does not point to trafficking from Central Asia being a problem that directly affects the UK. Nonetheless we deplore this vile crime wherever it takes place and we will continue to work with EU partners and others to combat it.

Indonesia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has taken recent action to urge the Government of Indonesia *(a)* not to execute and *(b)* to release (i) Fabianus Tibo, (ii) Dominggus Da Silva and (iii) Marinus Riwu; and if the Government will seek a demarche by the European Union to the Indonesian Government on the issue. [59064]

Ian Pearson: On 14 November 2005, as EU President, we approached the Government of Indonesia to express the EU's regret at the decision to carry out the executions, and asked them to refrain from carrying out the executions and to consider the abolition of the death penalty.

In January there were three further EU démarches, with the Minister of Law and Human Rights, with the Attorney-General, and in a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We will continue to press the EU to look for further opportunities to raise this matter with the Indonesian Government.

Iran

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to engage with the democratic opposition in Iran. [52185]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London and our embassy in Tehran maintain contact with a wide range of Iranians in many different fields. We are seriously concerned about human rights and political freedoms in Iran. Ministers and officials raise our concerns frequently with the Iranian authorities. We also take action through the EU, and in United Nations fora. We maintain a dialogue with those inside and outside the Iranian Government who are working to support reform and the rule of law. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said in a speech at the International Institute of Strategic Studies on 13 March,

> "We will not take sides in Iran's internal political debates—these are for Iranians to resolve and they are perfectly capable of doing so themselves. Given their history, Iranians are understandably sensitive about any hint of outside interference. But this does not mean that we should stop standing up for principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms which we hold dear to ourselves and which so many Iranians aspire to: freedom of speech; transparent, genuinely democratic and accountable government; respect for the rights of minorities and women; an independent judiciary".

Ministers and officials have no contact with an organisation proscribed under the Terrorism Act, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which purports to be a democratic opposition movement, nor with the National Council for the Resistance of Iran, a group with which it has close links. The MEK has been responsible for numerous attacks resulting in many deaths. Its claims to be a democratic party are hard to square with a history of violence and its authoritarian nature, and it has virtually no support inside Iran.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Saudi Government concerning the security situation in Iran. [59691]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has frequently discussed Iran and the regional security situation with Saudi interlocutors, including when he met His Royal Highness Prince Saud on 17 January.

Iraq

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that paramilitary troops are carrying out torture and executions in Iraq with the consent of the Interior Ministry. [58811]

Dr. Howells: We are aware of these reports and have raised our serious concerns with the Iraqi authorities at the highest levels. They have confirmed their commitment to the observance of human rights in Iraq, that such practices are contrary to Iraqi Government policy and that they are investigating. We are working with the Iraqi Government and international partners to develop respect for human rights through capacity building and awareness programmes. Helping to prevent further abuse is integral to our training of the security forces in Iraq.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what checks were made to ensure that the export of 20,878 semi-automatic pistols to Iraq referred to in the Second Quarterly Strategic Export Controls Report 2004 was consistent with Criterion Seven of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports; [59361]

(2) what checks were made to ensure that the export of 20,878 semi-automatic pistols to Iraq referred to in the Second Quarterly Strategic Export Controls Report 2004 was consistent with the UN Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts, Components and Ammunition. [59362]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* In accordance with our normal practice, this licence application was judged on its merits against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 2000 consolidation of the UK's 1997 national export licensing criteria and the 1998 EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports) taking into account prevailing circumstances at the time and other relevant announced Government policies.

The licence was issued following the conclusion that it would not contravene any of the criteria.

Criterion One provides that the Government will not issue an export licence where to do so would be inconsistent with the UK's international obligations and commitments, which include the UN Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts, Components and Ammunition.

Criterion Seven requires the Government to consider whether there is a risk that the equipment will be diverted within the buyer country or re-exported under undesirable conditions.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department's investigations into the meeting held in Baghdad in January 2003 between the hon. Member for Norwich, North (Dr. Gibson) and Dr. Rihab Taha will be completed; and if he will make a statement. [59992]

Dr. Howells: I am aware of media reports relating to the meeting referred to by the hon. Member. However, you will be aware that the Government have a longstanding policy of not commenting on intelligence matters alleged or otherwise.

Jericho Prison

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he made the decision to put into effect the threat contained in the letter from the UK and US Consuls General to withdraw UK monitors from Jericho Prison. [59759]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made the decision on 8 March that a letter should be sent to President Abbas informing him of our intention to withdraw the monitors with immediate effect unless the conditions noted in the letter were met. The Consul General in Jerusalem called the President's office on four separate occasions after delivering the letter to allow an opportunity for a response. As none was forthcoming, the monitors withdrew at a time judged to provide the greatest security to our monitors.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the US Secretary of State since December 2005 regarding the possibility of withdrawing US and UK monitors from Jericho Prison. [59760]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no discussions with the US Secretary of State since December 2005, regarding the possibility of withdrawing. Communication between the US and UK was carried out at official level.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date the Ramallah Agreement concerning the ending of the siege of the Palestinian presidential compound and the detention of prisoners to Jericho Prison was signed by *(a)* representatives of the Government of Israel and *(b)* representatives of the Palestinian Authority. [59762]

Dr. Howells: The Ramallah Agreement was agreed by the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority on 30 April 2002. The actual document is unsigned.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he received in the three weeks leading up to 14 March of Israeli military preparations in connection with the situation at Jericho prison. [59765]

Dr. Howells: We received no reports of Israeli military preparations. The location of the prison allowed it to be observed by Israeli defence forces, who would have been able to monitor activity including when the monitors left the prison. The Israeli authorities were aware of our letter dated 8 March, which noted that we would have to withdraw our monitors with immediate effect if our conditions were not met.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether a deadline was given to President Abbas to respond to the letter of 8 March 2006 from the UK and UK consuls general. [59845]

Dr. Howells: There was no deadline provided in the letter of 8 March, as it would have increased the security risk to our monitors. The letter noted that we would have to withdraw with immediate effect if our conditions were not met. Our consul general in Jerusalem called President Abbas's office on four separate occasions to ensure that the contents of the letter had been understood, before we withdrew on 14 March.

On 15 December 2005, our Deputy Head of Mission in Jerusalem informed Rafiq Husseini, in the President's Office, that if, at any stage, we felt that the threat to our monitors was too great, we would withdraw them.

Kenya

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Kenya regarding *(a)* press freedom, *(b)* the intimidation of journalists and newspapers and *(c)* the observance of democratic values; [58834]

(2) what assessment he has made of *(a)* reports of an attack by Kenyan security personnel on the offices of the Standard Media Group and *(b)* the implications of the attack for the entrenchment of democratic values in Kenya. [58835]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Ms Keeble) on 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1567W.

Since the police raids on the Standard media group on 2 March, we have been actively engaged in a number of discussions with the Kenyan Government to express our continuing concern over the attacks and their repercussions for freedom of expression and democratic values in Kenya. 26 nations, including the UK, publicly condemned the raids in a statement issued on 2 March.

The Government of Kenya has yet to give a credible account of the events of 2 March. This is needed to reassure the Kenyan people that there will be no recurrence and that the Government remains committed to supporting a free press, within a vibrant democratic society. We continue to make our views known, both privately and publicly.

Libya

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Libya regarding *(a)* the position of women within society, *(b)* gender equality and *(c)* the treatment of victims of rape and sexual violence. [58805]

Dr. Howells: The UK has discussed with Libya, in the early part of 2005, the role of women in the work force in Libya, and as part of the assistance the UK is providing in the area of prison management, we are addressing the needs of women in prison. The UK has not raised issues of gender equality and the treatment of victims of rape and sexual violence, but we continue to encourage the Libyan authorities to improve the human rights situation in Libya. We welcome the fact that non-governmental organisations, including Human Rights Watch, have been able to visit Libya to discus these and other issues with the authorities.

Pakistan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Pakistan regarding *(a)* repeal of the Hudood law and *(b)* the treatment of rape victims by the justice system. [58836]

Dr. Howells: In December 2005, as EU President, we presented a démarche on human rights to the Government of Pakistan. The démarche called for the repeal or modification of the Hudood laws, to prevent victims of rape from being wrongly accused of adultery, and significantly improve their ability for access to justice.

We were encouraged by the Federal Shariah Court's announcement in February 2006 that rape victims should not be tried for adultery, and by the government's recent pledge to repeal the Hudood laws. Our high commission in Islamabad continues to raise this issue regularly.

Ramallah Agreement

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the Ramallah Agreement in English. [59763]

Dr. Howells: A copy of the Ramallah Agreement in English was placed in the Library of the House on 15 March.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the responsibilities under the Ramallah Agreement of *(a)* Israel and *(b)* the Palestinian Authority. [59764]

Dr. Howells: A copy of the Ramallah Agreement in English was placed in the Library of the House on 15 March. It makes clear that the Palestinian Authority was responsible for the safety of our monitors.

Rendition

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his written statement of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 38WS, whether the UK requires the US to seek permission to render detainees via UK territory and airspace, including overseas territories. [59974]

Dr. Howells: Yes. We would expect the US authorities to seek permission to render detainees via UK territory and airspace, including overseas territories, and we will grant permission only if we are satisfied that the rendition would accord with UK law and our international obligations.

Royal Nepalese Army Barracks

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* conditions under which detainees are held inside Royal Nepalese Army barracks and *(b)* access to the Royal Nepalese Army barracks afforded to monitors from the International Committee of the Red Cross; and if he will make a statement. [59598]

Dr. Howells: In the week commencing 6 March, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced it would resume visits to Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) barracks. The ICRC had previously suspended these for about a year after the RNA had not given ICRC officers unhindered access. We assess that access to RNA detention is now satisfactory.

While the RNA has reduced the number of detainees, their conditions remain poor. The Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights visits found conditions that amount to degrading and inhuman treatment. This remains of serious concern.

Sri Lanka

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the government of Sri Lanka concerning their talks with Tamil Eelam in Geneva scheduled for mid April; and if he will make a statement. [59585]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera on 13 March. I met him on 15 March. We welcomed the first round of talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the Ceasefire Agreement and the agreement to hold further talks in Geneva from 19–21 April. The Foreign Minister agreed with us on the importance of all parties fully meeting the commitments that they made at Geneva, essentially to respect and uphold the Ceasefire Agreement, and fully co-operate with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission; to take all necessary measures to ensure no intimidation, acts of violence, abductions or killings; the LTTE to take all necessary measures to ensure no acts of violence against the security forces and police; the Government of Sri Lanka to take all necessary measures in accordance with the Ceasefire Agreement to ensure that no armed group or person other than Government security forces will carry arms or conduct armed operations.

We hope that the series of talks in Geneva can progress sufficiently well to allow early discussion of longer term issues. A permanent settlement is essential to establish a durable peace in Sri Lanka that meets the aspirations of all communities while ensuring a democratic and stable Sri Lanka. A key requirement will be for the LTTE to change course; to end terrorism and violence for good and to commit themselves to respecting human rights and freedom of expression in the areas they control.

We continue to strongly support the work of the Norwegian facilitators.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the actions of Colonel Karuna in eastern Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement. [59586]

Dr. Howells: The activities of the so-called Karuna faction are a destabilising factor in eastern Sri Lanka. Their violence is no more acceptable than that of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam's (LTTE). It is important for the maintenance of the current ceasefire that their operations and those of all other armed groups cease. I welcome the Government of Sri Lanka's important commitment at talks with the LTTE in Geneva in February to taking all necessary measures to prevent armed groups operating.

Sudan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the UN to introduce sanctions against those suspected of committing crimes against humanity in Darfur. [58814]

Ian Pearson: UN Security Council Resolution 1591 provides for the imposition of travel bans and assets freezes on individuals involved in the Darfur crisis who have committed violations of international law and other atrocities, or who impede the peace process. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee to impose such sanctions. Targeted sanctions against individuals will come into force with immediate effect when the UN Sanctions Committee decides to impose them. There should be no impunity for those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of statements by Jan Pronk regarding the deployment of troops from NATO countries to Darfur, with particular reference to his comments regarding Islamic terrorism. [58816]

Ian Pearson: NATO, through airlift co-ordination and training, is making a valuable contribution to the African Union's Mission in Sudan. We believe that NATO should continue to do so, and see no objection to troops from NATO countries participating in any future UN force in the Sudan.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Governments of *(a)* China, *(b)* Russia and *(c)* India regarding (i) human rights and conflict in and (ii) the trade in oil from Sudan. [58817]

Ian Pearson: We have regular discussions on the conflict in Sudan and human rights with Russia, China and other partners in the United Nation Security Council (UNSC). In his report on Sudan of 20 December 2005, the UN Secretary General called upon Sudan to ensure full transparency of the oil sector as a priority for 2006. This report was discussed by the UNSC on 13 January 2006. At the Sudan Consortium meeting of donors in Paris on 9–10 March the international community, including the UK, pressed the Government of Sudan to sign up to the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative. The Government of Sudan expressed their interest in doing so, and committed to improving transparency in the oil sector by publishing detailed information on oil production, revenues and transfers to the treasury. We will work with Sudan to ensure this happens. We have not held any recent discussions with India on Sudan.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Russia regarding the *(a)* sale of arms to Sudan and *(b)* implications of such sales for peace and human rights in Darfur. [58818]

Ian Pearson: UN Security Council Resolution 1591 extended the UN arms embargo on Darfur to cover all parties to the conflict, including the Government of Sudan. The UK believes that the arms embargo should be expanded to cover the whole of Sudan, in line with the EU arms embargo that has been in place since 1994. We have held regular discussions on this subject with Russia and our other Security Council partners, and will continue to take discussions on this forward in the Security Council.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the forced closure of the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO) in Zallingei and Geneina, West Darfur and the suspension of all humanitarian efforts there; and if he will make a statement. [59469]

Ian Pearson: The Government of Sudan issued notice to the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO) to suspend its work in West Darfur on 11 March 2006. This case was raised at a meeting on 13 March between the Government of Sudan and the international community, including the UK, on human rights. The UN have subsequently made formal representations to the Government of Sudan on this issue.

We have consistently made clear to the Government of Sudan that humanitarian agencies must be given unimpeded access to conduct their work. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development discussed the issue of humanitarian access with the Government of Sudan during his visit to Sudan on 21–23 February. We will continue to follow this case closely.

Torture (China/Tibet)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the preliminary report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture on his visit to China and Tibet. [59614]

Ian Pearson: We strongly supported the visit to China by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture in November 2005. We welcomed the preliminary assessment of the Special Rapporteur's visit in a UN press release on 2 December 2005, and look forward to publication of his full report in the near future. The press release can be found on the UN website at: http://www.unhchr.ch/huricane/huricane.nsf/0/677C 1943FAA14D67C12570 CB0034966D?opendocument. The Government agree with the Special Rapporteur's assessment that torture in China, though on the decline, particularly in urban areas, remains widespread and that this is increasingly recognised by Chinese officials. We hope the Chinese Government will consider carefully the Rapporteur's recommendations when they issue with a view to making a wholehearted effort to implement them.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will table a resolution on torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners and detainees in Tibet and China at the forthcoming Session of the UN Commission for Human Rights. [59615]

Ian Pearson: The Government remain concerned about torture and the inhumane treatment of prisoners in China and Tibet. We regularly raise these concerns with the Chinese authorities, including through the UK- and EU- China Human Rights Dialogues. With uncertainty over the exact format of the Commission on Human Rights this year, it is not clear what scope there will be for consideration of this issue at the Commission. However, we continue to look for appropriate opportunities to raise our concerns with the Chinese authorities.

Uzbekistan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the charges used to convict Mutabar Tojibayeva in Tashkent; what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the Government of Uzbekistan concerning this incident; and if he will make a statement. [59597]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK and our EU partners have closely followed the detention and prosecution of Ms Mutabar Tojibayeva. Our ambassador in Tashkent has regularly raised her case and others, including those of Sanjar Umarov and Nodira Khidoyatova, at official and ministerial level, both bilaterally and while the UK held the presidency of the EU. On 17 January 2006, we supported a demarche by the local EU presidency seeking clarification on the welfare of Ms Tojibayeva.

We joined EU partners in observing her trial which finished on 6 March 2006. We welcomed the access given to these court proceedings, but the process and outcome do little to dispel the widely held belief that this and other recent cases were politically motivated.

On 9 March 2006, we joined our EU colleagues in a statement urging the Uzbek authorities to review the convictions and ensure a fair trial with access to national and international observers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of recent arrests and detentions of opposition and human rights activists in Uzbekistan; and if he will make a statement. [59650]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since May 2005 we have witnessed a programme of detention and harassment of those, including human rights defenders, journalists and others, who have questioned the authorities' version of events in Andizhan.

I am deeply concerned by the sentences passed recently on Sanjar Umarov, Mutabar Tojibayeva and Nodira Khidoyatova, as well as other moves against civil society, including the closure of several international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during the past year. In addition to the restrictive measures introduced against Uzbekistan by the EU in October last year under our presidency, we also supported the resolution in the United Nations General Assembly in November 2005, highlighting the deterioration in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. We have made numerous representations both bilaterally and with our EU partners on the situation as a whole and individual cases.

I strongly urge the Uzbek authorities to allow, in conformity with Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe principles and commitments, individual human rights defenders and NGOs to make their full contribution to the development of civil society and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Uzbekistan.

Visas (Pakistan/India/Bangladesh)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the average processing times were for *(a)* non-settlement and *(b)* settlement visa applications at each office in (i) Pakistan, (ii) India and (iii) Bangladesh in the last period for which figures are available. [58677]

Dr. Howells: The figures for processing times at each visa section in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, as per UKvisas' public service agreements are as follows. These statistics are for the last quarter of 2005.

Percentage

Visa section	*Straightforward non-settlement applications processed within 24 hours*	*Non-settlement applications requiring further inquiries or interview processed within 15 days*	*Settlement applications processed within 12 weeks (but please see notes for Islamabad, New Delhi and Dhaka)*
Islamabad	62.7	100	[1]100
Karachi	95.6	97	100
New Delhi	100	93	[1]100
Mumbai	98	94	100
Chennai	95	100	100
Kolkata	100	100	100
Dhaka	100	100	[1]100

[1] The target of 12 weeks does not apply to visa sections in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dhaka which receive a large number of settlement applications. At these posts, settlement applications are separated into four queues, for which figures are as follows.

Percentage

Visa section	*Right of Abode claimants, dependent relatives over 65 and special compassionate case processed within three months*	*Spouses and children under 18 processed within three months*	*Fiancé(e)s and other settlement categories processed within six months*	*Settlement re-applicants processed within nine months*
Islamabad	100	100	100	100
New Delhi	100	100	100	100
Dhaka	100	100	100	none received

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visa applications were *(a)* made and *(b)* processed in (i) Pakistan, (ii) India and (iii) Bangladesh in each year since 2002. [58678]

Dr. Howells: The number of visa applications received, issued and refused by our missions in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh since 2002 are as follows. UKvisas' published statistics are for the financial year, not the calendar year.

		Pakistan	*India*	*Bangladesh*
2002-03	Applications received	74,043	236,431	29,637
	Entry clearance issued	52,632	196,693	21,504
	Entry clearance refused	10,173	39,642	10,658
2003-04	Applications received	122,900	300,452	39,090
	Entry clearance issued	93,982	240,306	21,748
	Entry clearance refused	21,775	58,635	11,914
2004-05	Applications received	190,539	344,764	42,568
	Entry clearance issued	102,951	280,537	20,837
	Entry clearance refused	81,643	72,904	19,153
2005-06[1]	Applications received	156,171	351,890	35,508
	Entry clearance issued	87,787	275,915	19,542
	Entry clearance refused	61,252	69,360	14,408

[1] The figures for 2005-2006 are from April to February. These figures are not UKvisas' published figures, but are collected from the visa central reference system. UKvisas makes every effort to ensure that statistics produced from the central reference system are accurate. However, the complexity of our global business, including technical failures or occasional inconsistencies in data entry across any of over 150 offices, means we cannot 100 per cent. guarantee accuracy.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what periods since 2002 each visa office in *(a)* Pakistan, *(b)* India and *(c)* Bangladesh was not able to accept visa applications for (i) students, (ii) first-time visitors under 25 years and (iii) working holiday makers. [58679]

Dr. Howells: Visa services were suspended at our high commission in Islamabad and deputy high commission in Karachi in May 2002 due to the regional crisis. A limited visa service was re-opened in June 2002, firstly for urgent cases. The service was then gradually re-opened to students, applicants for settlement visas and visitors who had previously travelled to the UK in the previous five years and complied with the terms of their visas. The last category to re-open in Pakistan was first time visitors under 30 in May 2004, but due to capacity constraints this category was closed in July 2004, with a lowered age restriction of 25 with the exception of family visits. This category was re-opened in August 2005 after the Memorandum of Understanding on Managed Immigration was signed with Pakistan. Working holiday makers have not been able to apply in Pakistan since May 2002. My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, will write to my hon. Friend with fuller details of the restrictions in Pakistan following the 2002 crisis.

Most staff at our missions in New Delhi and Mumbai were evacuated in May 2002 for the same reason as in Pakistan. However, a skeleton staff remained and applications were accepted from those who had previously travelled to the UK and in emergency cases. From mid July 2002, student applications were accepted and a normal service resumed in August 2002. Chennai's visa service was closed to all applicants from 21 to 30 May 2005 as the deputy high commission moved offices. However, entry clearance applications were still accepted through the outsourced visa facilitation services and were sent to New Delhi for processing.

Since 2002, there have been no restrictions on the visa service in Bangladesh.

Western Shoshone People

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the US Administration concerning the treatment of (i) the Western Shoshone people, (ii) Western Shoshone land and (iii) Western Shoshone livestock; and if he will make a statement. [59593]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not made any representations to the US Administration on these issues.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Funding (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on funding for schools in North Yorkshire for 2006–07. [59011]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to my statement of 7 December 2005, which set out the arrangements for school funding for North Yorkshire and all other local authorities in England. Further details may be found on the Teachernet website at:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006-07_funding_arrangements/

A-levels

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the compulsory requirements are for a student undertaking an A-level course of study. [58993]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 16 March 2006]*: There are no compulsory requirements for students undertaking an A-level course of study. However, schools and colleges do set minimum requirements for 16–19 year olds embarking on A-level programmes to ensure that they will cope with the programme.

Care Leavers

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support services relating to the financial and practical aspects of independent living are available to young people leaving care in Essex. [59178]

Maria Eagle: Services to care leavers who are the responsibility of Essex county council are provided directly by the local authority through its Leaving and After Care Service, which is part of the Children and Young People's Service. The service operates four local teams, based in Colchester, Chelmsford, Harlow and Rochford. They comprise personal advisers (PAs) who are responsible for planning and providing support for all individual care leavers for whom Essex has a responsibility. There is, in addition, a county-wide Accommodation Team which has the remit of providing accommodation to meet care leavers' specific needs, ensuring that any accommodation they are allocated has the necessary support, to enable young people to develop their independent living skills.

Every care leaver is required to have a pathway plan, which is based on an assessment of their personal needs, setting out the services that will be necessary to support them towards greater independence. The exact level of financial support provided to any care leaver will be recorded in this plan. Up until the age of 18, the local authority will usually be his/her primary source of income. Essex, as is the case for other local authorities, is responsible for funding accommodation, maintenance and other expenses (e.g. travel and leisure costs). Once care leavers reach 18, they are then entitled to have access to the same mainstream arrangements for obtaining financial help as other young people. It is the personal adviser's role to assist them to access this help. However, Essex, as the responsible local authority, has a continuing duty to provide assistance, for as long as they remain in an approved programme, with the costs of education or training.

Child Protection

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to question 47462 on school bus drivers, how many bus drivers are included on List 99; whether bus drivers have been permitted to carry on working with children following convictions for sexual offences against minors; and what measures are in place to check taxi and minicab drivers who drive special needs children to school. [58050]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not hold the detail of how many bus drivers are on List 99. The Department for Education and Skills' guidance to local authorities on home to school transport arrangements for children with special educational needs states that criminal record checks are essential for escorts, and, where they are in sole charge of children, for taxi drivers and minicab drivers.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill includes a requirement for bus drivers, taxi drivers, minicab drivers, and escorts who care for, or have a supervisory role over children, to be checked.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is on employing persons on *(a)* the Register of Sex Offenders and *(b)* List 99 in jobs involving working with children. [47438]

Ruth Kelly: My statement and accompanying report to Parliament on 19 January outlined the Government's analysis of, and response to, issues concerning child protection and List 99 together with the action we are currently taking. A further update on progress was provided on 1 March.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she takes to ensure that individuals on List 99 are informed of their inclusion on the list; what estimate she has made of the number of individuals who are included on List 99 who are not aware of their inclusion; and in what circumstances an individual can be removed from List 99. [49856]

Ruth Kelly: Individuals included on List 99 are informed of their inclusion by means of a letter. Further detail on the procedures followed can be found in the guidance on 'Child Protection: Procedures for Barring or Restricting People Working with Children in Education' available on the DfES website at www. Teachernet.gov.uk/barringprocedures. Any prospective employer should undertake the necessary pre-appointment checks before employing an individual. This would include checking List 99.

You will find detail of the circumstances in which an individual can appeal against inclusion on List 99 in 'A guide to the appeals process and procedures of the Care Standards Tribunal' which can be found on the Care Standards website at www.carestandardstribunal.gov.uk. In addition the terms by which appeals can be heard are detailed in the report laid before The House of Commons on 19 January 2006 by the Secretary of State at paragraphs 15–18 which can be found at: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/briefing/news/

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the review of the criteria for inclusion on List 99. [42093]

Ruth Kelly: I have already announced that I will review the decision-making processes surrounding such cases and any immediate policy implications including how the closest possible alignment can be secured between List 99, the Sex Offenders Register and other data sources.

Following the Bichard Report the Government are already committed to implementing Sir Michael Bichard's recommendations to tighten the system for vetting and barring those who wish to work with children and vulnerable adults and to bringing forward legislation in this session of Parliament.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have been taken off List 99 in each of the last 10 years. [42106]

Ruth Kelly: We do not hold information for the last 10 years.

The numbers removed from List 99 include individuals originally placed on List 99 for a range of reasons, including in relation to a person's health, on the grounds of misconduct, on the grounds of unsuitability, Protection of Children Act cases, disqualification orders, cases concluded in Northern Ireland or Scotland and abeyance cases. The vast majority have been removed through death or old age.

Number removed from List 99

	Number
2001	147
2002	66
2003	87
2004	48
2005	174

Further information about the arrangements for including and removing people from List 99 is given in my statement of 19 January.

Education Maintenace Allowance (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in West Lancashire constituency have received the education maintenance allowance. [52783]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate Education Maintenance Allowances for the DfES and hold the information about take-up of the scheme. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, has written to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006:

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "how many students have claimed education maintenance allowance in West Lancashire in each year it has been available; and how many she estimates will claim it in 2006–07?"

Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and received EMA is available at local authority level, but not at constituency level. The information relates to academic years.

During the academic year 2004/05, 7,081 young people in Lancashire Local Education Authority received one or more EMA payments. During the academic year 2005/06, 9,638 young people have received one or more EMA payments so far (as at 31 paDecember).

Forecasts of EMA take-up at a national level have recently been revised to reflect better input data and assumptions. However, due to the complexities involved in producing forecasts at sub-national level, comparable forecasts for the academic year 2006/07 and beyond at LEA level are not available until spring 2006.

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Chris Bradley at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4512 or christopher bradley@lsc.gov.uk

Children in Care

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards ensuring that by 2008 80 per cent. of children under 16 years who have been looked after for two and a half or more years will have been living in the same placement for at least two years, or are placed for adoption. [58025]

Maria Eagle: Performance at national level against this measure was as follows.

Year to March	*Percentage*
2003	63
2004	65
2005	65

This data is published by the Department for Education and Skills and can be accessed at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000615/index.shtml

Classrooms

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many classrooms in schools have been built under private finance initiative schemes; what the size is of each new classroom; what guidance she has issued on the minimum size of classroom; and if she will make a statement. [59393]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information specifically on the number or size of new classrooms in PFI schools. We produce non-statutory guidance on the overall size of schools and of individual classrooms in the form of Building Bulletins 98 and 99: 'Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects' and 'Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects', respectively. The application of this guidance to individual projects is a matter for local decision-making, although the Department strongly encourages local authorities to follow the area guidelines set out in its Building Bulletins.

Education White Paper

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a race equality impact assessment has been carried out on the proposals contained in the education White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. [49452]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* A full race equality impact assessment has been carried out on relevant proposals within the White Paper. The assessment was published on my Department's website on 28 February, the day the Education Bill was introduced.

European Diploma Supplement

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the progress of the European Diploma Supplement. [58975]

Bill Rammell: A recent survey by the sector-wide UK Higher Education Europe Unit reported that 99 per cent. of UK higher education institutions (HEIs) are aware of the supplement and that one in three is already issuing it. The Europe Unit is advising HEIs on issuing the Diploma Supplement in the UK and is working with the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (UKNARIC) and the UK network of Bologna Promoters to increase the implementation of the Diploma Supplement.

Further Education

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition her Department uses of a full-time course in further education. [58913]

Bill Rammell: The main DfES and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) statistical series define further education full-time learners as those enrolled on programmes of at least 450 guided learning hours per year, or of at least 150 guided learning hours per tri-annual period or more than 16 guided learning hours per week for shorter courses.

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many 16 to 18-year-olds in Devon colleges were funded in part by virement from other further education funding in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; [59451]

(2) how many 16 to 18-year-old full-time equivalent students in Devon colleges were not funded at the further education average rate for 16 to 18-year-olds in 2003–04. [59452]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 17 March]:* Since 1997 funding for further education has increased by around £2.5 billion—equivalent to around 48 per cent. in real terms. Our investment in FE participation will increase further from £4.9 billion in 2005–06 to £5.1 billion in 2006–07. However, colleges are independent bodies and decide for themselves how they manage the funds they receive from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). We do not collect information on the decisions that colleges take regarding the management of their budgets. No 16 to 19-year-olds were unfunded in 2003–04. Further education colleges delivering learning for young people above the planned volumes agreed with the LSC were provided with extra funding for these additional learners.

GCSE Grades

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of secondary school students in Tamworth constituency achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997; and if she will make a statement. [58081]

Jacqui Smith: Pupils nationally have made excellent progress since 1997. The improvement in the proportion of 15-year-olds achieving 5 A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalents has been 11 percentage points. Over 67,000 more pupils[1] are now achieving at this level than in 1997.

[1] Based on a standardised cohort of 600,000 pupils.

The GCSE and equivalent achievements of young people, in 1997 and 2005, in the Tamworth constituency are provided in the table. They are also available on the 'In Your Area' website at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea/.

	Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving the equivalent of 5 or more GCSEs at A-C*	
	Tamworth[1]	*England*[2]
2005	45.5	56.3
1997	38.5	45.1

[1] Local figures are based on maintained schools only
[2] National figures are based on all schools

Head Teachers

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the use of mentoring for head teachers by Plymouth City Council; and whether there are circumstances under which her Department would seek to intervene if it considered such mentoring costs to be excessive. [59420]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* We have made no assessment because Plymouth's use of the mentoring scheme is a local matter, based on local needs. It is for schools and local authorities to determine the arrangements they put in place to support their school leaders. Head teacher mentoring can play a key role in supporting school leaders in their goal to raise standards.

Homophobic Bullying

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcome was of the meeting of Ministers on 23 March 2004 to consider measures to tackle homophobic bullying in schools; and if she will make a statement. [59706]

Jacqui Smith: Following the meeting in March 2004, the Department for Education and Skills has been leading on work across Government to counter homophobia in our schools. Work on tackling homophobic bullying is one strand of this. As recommended by the Practitioners Group on Behaviour and Discipline, the recent White Paper committed the Department to producing specific guidance for schools on countering homophobic bullying as part of a suite of materials on prejudice driven bullying. We recently hosted a scoping meeting, involving leading experts from the fields of both anti-bullying and anti-homophobia, along with the professional associations and representatives from local authorities. The advice will be published during anti bullying week 2006, and between now and then we will be further consulting schools, local authorities and children and young people to inform its development.

This guidance will build on advice already offered to schools in "Stand Up for Us: Challenging Homophobia" in Schools which was prepared by the National Healthy Schools Programme with considerable input from the Department. "Stand Up For Us" was made available to schools in November 2004 and sets out a practical approach for schools and suggests steps to create an environment where everyone can feel welcome and valued.

To establish the baseline position here, we published "Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: a review and implications for action", during anti bullying week in November 2004. This review, by the Thomas Coram Research Unit, looks at three areas: behaviour and bullying; teaching and learning about sexual orientation and relationships; and employment issues. It collates, summarises and assesses both peer reviewed research material, from this country and abroad, and less formal work conducted by bodies active in this area. It also reports the views of a wide range of organisations, 28 in all, with an interest in this area to paint a picture of how the issues are currently perceived. The report is available on the DfES website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research and the findings will be used to inform the development of further advice to schools.

Information and Communication Technology

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on the trial of the National Curriculum Online Test of Capability in Information and Communication Technology taken at the end of Key Stage 3; [59515]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the National Curriculum Online Test of Capability in Information and Communication Technology can be taken by more than 50 pupils in a school in one session; [59516]

(3) what responses her Department received from schools involved in the trial of the National Curriculum Online Test of Capability in Information and Communication Technology. [59517]

Jacqui Smith: We are committed to introducing a new statutory Key Stage 3 test in Information and Communication Technology in 2008, subject to a successful pilot. The test is being developed in recognition of the place of ICT as an essential skill for the 21st century and as an independent measure of the attainment target for ICT at the end of Key Stage 3.

Pilots of the test took place in 2004 and 2005. There will be further pilots in May 2006 and in 2007. All secondary schools should be taking part in these pilots to ensure that they are fully prepared for the test in 2008.

The ground-breaking test design was recognised in the Computing Awards for Excellence 2005, where it was judged to be the Innovative Computing Project of the Year, and in the 2005 e-Government National Awards.

The test system does not put a limit on the number of pupils who may take the test at any one time, which will be a matter for schools to decide. As many schools will not have sufficient workstations for all their pupils to take the test at one time, the QCA proposes that schools should be able to arrange test sessions to take place at any time within a four-week window. To ensure the necessary high level of security, the test's software automatically generates different versions of each task and randomly allocates these to pupils.

The QCA gathered feedback from schools to inform their evaluation of the 2005 pilot and further development of the test. Schools' responses are summarised in the "Report on the 2005 KS3ICT Test Pilot", which is available from the QCA's website www.qca.org.uk/7280.html. Feedback from participating schools was very positive and the new test was widely welcomed by teachers and pupils.

Learning and Study Skills

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what materials she will provide to deprived parents to use at home to support their child's learning and study skills as referred to on page 67 of the White Paper 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All'. [53488]

Jacqui Smith: We are developing proposals on how best to engage all parents so that they are better able to support their child's learning. We will also consider how to support parents with additional needs, including deprived parents. We will ensure schools provide better information and support for parents on the progress of their child at school, including materials to use at home for those parents who have children that have fallen behind in English and mathematics.

Since 1997, we have sought to enhance parental involvement in children's learning through a range of measures targeted at parents and schools. These include information for parents such as videos, DVDs, the Learning Journey guides, the Parents Centre website, and funding for helplines offering advice on educational issues; and materials for schools such as the Involving Parents, Raising Achievement toolkit, and others disseminated through the Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies.

Level 2 Qualifications

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards increasing by three percentage points the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least level 2 by 2006. [59268]

Jacqui Smith: We are making excellent progress towards our PSA target. Figures released in February 2006 show a 3 percentage point increase between 2004 and 2005 in the attainment of young people at level 2 (5 GCSE A*–C or equivalent) by the age of 19. The target we are aiming for is 69.8 per cent. in 2006, 68.4 per cent. of the youngsters who will be 19 in 2006 are already at level 2 or above in 2005.

Lifelong Learning/Higher Education Directorates

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the pay levels of senior non-civil servant staff attached to the *(a)* Lifelong Learning Directorate and *(b)* Higher Education Directorate are; and if she will make a statement. [43073]

Maria Eagle: The following provides information on the pay levels of senior non-civil servant staff attached to the Lifelong Learning and Skills and Higher Education Directorates on significant attachments, full or part time, lasting for more than three months.

In Lifelong Learning and Skills Directorate there are currently six senior consultants attached to Directorate on a part-time basis (usually no more than a few days a month) at an average daily rate of £1,129. In addition there 25 individuals working part time or full time in the Directorate who are on secondment from other organisations in the education and training sector. Three of the secondees are not paid by the Department and we therefore hold no salary information on them. The salaries of other secondees range from £11,064 to £99,636 per annum.

In Higher Education Directorate there are currently five senior consultants attached to Directorate on a part-time basis (again usually no more than a few days a month) at an average daily rate of £1,164.

Senior consultants or secondees are engaged by the Department where individuals with a particular knowledge and expertise are required and where that knowledge and expertise are not available within the Department.

Mature Students

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which 10 higher education institutions have the *(a)* largest and *(b)* smallest percentage of mature students. [39906]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information for English Higher Education Institutions is shown in the tables.

10 HE institutions with the largest percentage of mature[1] enrolments, 2004/05

HE institution	*Number of enrolments*	*% mature*
Royal College of Nursing	880	100
London Business School	1,625	99
Open University	173,015	96
Birkbeck College	14,905	96
Homerton College	2,765	93
Institute of Education	6,770	88
Thames Valley University	20,015	87
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	970	84
St. George's Hospital Medical School	3,510	83
University of Bolton	7,475	82
All English HE institutions	1,895,825	64

[1] 'Mature' enrolments are those aged 21 years or over on undergraduate courses or 25 years or over on postgraduate courses.

Note:

Figures are on a HESA standard registration population basis and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record

10 HE institutions with the smallest percentage of mature[1] enrolments, 2004/05

HE institution	*Number of enrolments*	*% mature*
Cumbria Institute of the Arts	1,045	43
London School of Economics and Political Science	8,815	43
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	18,510	43
Loughborough University	16,270	42
Royal College of Music	610	42
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	7,655	40
Royal Academy of Music	735	39
Trinity and All Saints College	2,500	39
University of Durham	16,980	37
Royal Northern College of Music	555	36
All English HE institutions	1,895,825	64

[1] 'Mature' enrolments are those aged 21 years or over on undergraduate courses or 25 years or over on postgraduate courses.

Note:

Figures are on a HESA standard registration population basis and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record

Obesity

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards reducing the rise in obesity among children under 11 years by 2010. [58023]

Jacqui Smith: The public service agreement to halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole is the joint responsibility of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, the Secretary of State for Health, and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Joint cross-departmental programme management arrangements have been established to drive action to meet this target. Progress will be measured through the Health Survey for England. The baseline will be established for the years 2002–04: the data, from the 2004 Health Survey to support this will be available shortly. We shall assess progress when the 2005 Health Survey data is available.

The Government's obesity strategy addresses the issue through a wide range of programmes.

We are taking action to encourage children, parents, and parents to be to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle through:

advice and support from midwives and health visitors,

support provided in Sure Start Children's Centres,

obesity and overweight care pathways for GPs,

the Healthy Schools programme,

measures to improve the wellbeing and emotional health of children and to develop their social and emotional skills, and

a social marketing campaign being developed for launch in the autumn.

We are taking action to support healthy eating through:

the 5 A DAY campaign,

the Healthy Start scheme,

the School Fruit and Vegetable scheme,

new statutory nutritional standards for food in schools,

measures to control the labelling of packaged food, and

work with the food and advertising industries, Ofcom and the Advertising Standards Authority on restricting further the advertising and food promotion to children of foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

We are making significant progress in encouraging children and adults to increase their levels of exercise through:

creating, improving and developing children's play provision,

increasing the amount of time pupils spend on quality PE and school sport,

encouraging walking and cycling to school through school travel plans,

the 10,000 steps a day initiative, and

promoting more unusual sports for hard-to-engage children.

Part-time Education

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what provision her Department has made for parents who wish their children to go to school part-time and be home-schooled part-time; [59505]

(2) if she will make a statement on home schooling; [59506]

(3) how many children in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England were home-schooled in each of the last five years; [59507]

(4) what research her Department has evaluated on home schooling; and what the conclusions were of the research; [59508]

(5) how many local education authorities *(a)* allow children to enrol in schools on a part-time basis and *(b)* have children that have enrolled in schools on a part-time basis [59509]

(6) what estimate she has made of *(a)* how many children are enrolled in schools on a part-time basis and *(b)* what proportion of those children are also home-schooled. [59510]

Jacqui Smith: Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive a full-time education, by attending school or through other arrangements. They may exercise their right to educate their children at home full-time on a temporary or permanent basis. Schools have the discretion to agree arrangements that combine part-time school attendance with home education.

Curently, 328,344 children attend school on a part-time basis across all 150 LAs. We do not collect data on the reasons that these pupils are attending on a part-time basis, which may include education in reception classes, reintegration to school following illness, and partial home-education.

My Department has not evaluated any research on home education.

I also refer my hon. Friend to the replies given on 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1916W and 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1566W.

Physical Literacy

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she has made progress in introducing the concept of physical literacy as part of the national curriculum in primary schools. [59651]

Jacqui Smith: Physical Education is a compulsory foundation subject within the National Curriculum. The Physical Education Programmes of Study sets out—for all Key Stages—the knowledge, skills and understanding pupils need in order to be physically literate.

The Office for Standards in Education 2003/04 Physical Education subject report shows that the quality of teaching is good or better in 60 per cent. of primary schools and 80 per cent. of secondary schools. Pupils' achievement in Physical Education is satisfactory in the majority of primary schools, and good or better in over 50 per cent. In the secondary sector, pupils' achievement in Physical Education is good or better in 80 per cent. of schools at Key Stage 3 and 66 per cent. of schools at Key Stage 4.

The professional development programme within the National School Sport strategy is also helping to ensure teachers and others have the tools and expertise that they need to deliver high quality Physical Education. So far this financial year, over 43,000 teacher places have been taken up on the programme.

Private Offices

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of her private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55732]

Ruth Kelly: The cost of my private office for 2004–05 was £566,000.

Professional Institutes

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which learned institutes are recognised by her Department as professional bodies. [57351]

Jacqui Smith: The Department works with a number of organisations, many of which might be termed as learned institutes or professional bodies. While my Department does not operate a recognition system for learned institutes or professional bodies, many bodies have sought a Royal Charter and are regulated through the Privy Council. Other highly respected learned and professional bodies have chosen to stay independent.

Racist Incidents

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many racist incidents among pupils were recorded in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* further education institutions in Lancashire in each year since 1997. [59601]

Jacqui Smith: The requirement to record and report all racist incidents in schools came into force in November 1999. However, Lancashire county council independently kept records before that date. On the basis of information provided by Lancashire county council, in 1997–98, 52 racist incidents were reported to the then LA, of which 21 were in primary schools and 31 in secondary. In 1998–99, 76 racist incidents were reported, (26 in primary, and 50 in secondary schools). In 1999–2000 110 incidents were reported (48 in primary, and 62 in secondary schools); in 2000–2001, 244 incidents (127 in primary, and 117 in secondary schools; and in 2001–02 , 289 incidents (190 in primary and 99 in secondary schools). In 2002–03, 396 incidents were reported to Lancashire county council (183 in primary schools and 173 in secondary); in 2003–2004, 351 incidents (165 in primary schools and 148 in secondary); and in 2004–05, the latest year for which figures are available, 472 incidents were recorded, of which 230 took place in primary schools and 191 in secondary schools.

For 2002–05, the combined numbers of racist incidents between pupils recorded in primary and in secondary schools are lower than the total number. This is because the total figure includes numbers of racist incidents recorded as taking place in nursery, infant, junior, special schools and short stay institutions.

Information in relation to racist incidents among students in further education institutions in England, is unavailable as statistics are not routinely collated by the Department or by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the main funding body for further education.

School Finance (Swindon)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding per pupil was provided to schools in Swindon in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [59441]

Jacqui Smith: Total funding per pupil aged 3–19 (real terms) in Swindon was £2,790 in 1997–98 and £3,790 in 2005–06.

These figures include all funding for education via Education Formula Spending (EFS) and education grants allocated at an authority level. They exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and the Learning and Skills Council, and are in real terms.

Notes:

Price Base: Real terms at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 23 December 2005.

Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Standard Spending Assessment / Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.

Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude education maintenance allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.

The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3-year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3–4 year olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.

Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.

Status: 2005–06 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

School Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department has spent on school sport in each year since 2000. [59675]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The table sets out the actual, and for the current financial year (2005–06) the projected, spend by the Department for Education and Skills on school sport since 2000–01. The figures have been rounded up to the nearest thousand.

Financial Year	*£ million*
Actual Spend on School Sport	
2000–01	9.5
2001–02	14.6
2002–03	23.5
2003–04	84.254
2004–05	116.463
Projected Spend on School Sport	
2005–06	155.25

School Staffing Structure

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what funding has been provided for schools in Gloucestershire to implement *(a)* the Schools Staffing Structure Review and *(b)* Planning Preparation and Assessment; [59156]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact of *(a)* the Schools Staffing Structure Review and *(b)* planning, preparation and assessment on headteachers' workloads in small schools; [59157]

(3) what assessment she has made of the impact of the requirements of the *(a)* Schools Staffing Structure review and *(b)* planning, preparation and assessment on the workload of headteachers; and if she will make a statement; [59150]

(4) what *(a)* financial and *(b)* administrative assistance she has provided for headteachers in small schools to implement (i) the Schools Staffing Structure Review and (ii) the requirements of planning, preparation and assessment. [59109]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* We have given careful consideration, in consultation with our national education partners, to the additional resources that schools might require in the financial years 2005–06 and 2006–07 to implement guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for all teachers. This included a survey of real schools including those with relatively low funding, small schools, and those in rural areas, to gain a better understanding of their starting points, how they planned to deliver PPA and the extent to which they could achieve this through the redeployment of existing resources and the additional resources required.

In the light of this, we concluded that there would be an average additional cost pressure for nursery and primary schools of 0.8 per cent. to 1 per cent. per pupil in 2005–06 and 0.7 per cent. per pupil in 2006–07. We reflected these extra pressures by setting the minimum funding guarantee for primary and nursery schools for 2005–06 at 5 per cent. per pupil, compared with 4 per cent. per pupil for secondary and special schools and at 4 per cent. per pupil in 2006–07, compared with 3.4 per cent. per pupil for secondary and special schools.

The minimum increases for schools have been backed by substantial headroom at local authority level in each year, which authorities can use to support schools with particular pressures arising from PPA, including very small schools. In 2005–06, Gloucestershire received an increase in its Schools Formula Spending Share of 6.9 per cent. per pupil, and for 2006–07 it will receive an increase in its allocation of the new Dedicated Schools Grant of 6.8 per cent. per pupil (compared with its budgeted spending in 2005–06). These increases equal the national average increase in each year. It is for each local authority, in consultation with its Schools Forum, to decide on the distribution of funding between the schools in its area.

Nothing in the review of staffing structure process compels schools to incur additional expenditure. Any changes to the staffing structure, and the timing of the implementation of such changes, are within schools' control, provided that they are implemented by 31 December 2008.

We have made no specific assessment of the impact of either the Schools Staffing Structure Review or PPA on headteachers1 workloads in small schools. However, we are aware that both the implementation of PPA time and the review of school staffing structures were major tasks for headteachers and school leaders to manage last year. Of course, headteachers who have a teaching timetable, which is most common in small schools, will themselves benefit from PPA time.

Headteachers will also benefit from other elements of our workforce reform programme, such as dedicated headship time for headteachers (introduced in September 2005) and the provisions on work/life balance (effective from September 2003). We are very conscious of the need to bear down on headteacher workload and, in response to a School Teachers' Review Body recommendation, have announced an independent study into the roles, responsibilities, structures and rewards systems for the leadership group.

We provided all headteachers with a great deal of guidance to help them implement PPA and review their staffing structure. On PPA, national guidance has been issued by the National Remodelling Team, and that has been backed up by practical advice and support from a national network of local authority based remodelling advisers. On the staffing structure review, I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave him on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 350–1W, on Headteacher's Staffing Reviews, concerning the support provided.

Schools (Sales)

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what Government policy is on the use by local authorities of the proceeds from the sale of schools. [58971]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities are free to dispose of redundant school buildings and to use any sale proceeds as they see fit. However, in the case of surplus or redundant school playing fields, local authorities are required, in line with the Government's policy to protect school playing fields, to obtain the Secretary of State's prior consent and such consent will only be given where the local authority undertakes to recycle the sale proceeds for sport or educational purposes.

School Funding

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average funding per pupil is for 2005–06 in Coventry, South. [55992]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Department does not collect information on school funding at constituency level. It only collects funding information at the local authority level. The average funding per pupil aged 3 to19 in Coventry in 2005–06 is £4,200. In 1997–98 the equivalent figure was £2,920: this represents an increase over this period of some 1,280 in real terms.

Notes:

Price Base: Real terms at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 23 December 2005.

Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of standard spending assessment/education formula spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.

Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3 to19 and exclude education maintenance allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.

The pupil numbers used to convert £m figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3 year old maintained pupils and estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.

Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.

Status: 2005–06 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Selection

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria schools will be able to use to select pupils for secondary education under the terms of the Education and Inspections Bill. [59692]

Jacqui Smith: Clause 36 of the Bill reaffirms the general rule that children should not be selected for admission to schools on the basis of academic ability. It prevents the introduction of any new selection by ability, and clarifies that any school that becomes its own admission authority will not be able to select pupils by ability, if it doesn't already do so.

Legislation will continue to allow exceptions to the general restriction on selection—i.e. by grammar schools and other schools which, in 1997/98, selected a proportion of their intake by ability or aptitude. It will also continue to be permissible for admission authorities to introduce selection of up to 10 per cent. of their intake on the basis of aptitude for prescribed subjects.

But there are other means of 'selecting' or giving pupils priority for admission to schools. Clause 40 of the Bill prohibits schools from interviewing either parents or their children as part of their admission arrangements.

Clause 37 will give a new School Admissions Code greater force than the existing Code of Practice. It will impose requirements on admission authorities and they will have to act in accordance with its provisions and guidelines. The new Code will set out what are acceptable and unacceptable admission criteria and practices, to ensure that all schools use fair admissions processes.

Single-sex Schools

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of single sex Muslim schools likely to be established over the next decade as a consequence of the Government's promotion of diversity of provision; and if she will make a statement. [59416]

Jacqui Smith: Promoters of new schools may bring forward proposals at any time in response to local parental demand. Before publishing proposals they must consult widely. The decision whether or not proposals are approved is made locally. Decision makers must have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State when considering proposals for new schools. The guidance requires them to take into account a range of factors, including the effect on standards, views of interested parties and the extent to which the proposals address the need to promote community cohesion. In particular, decision makers are required to consider any sex discrimination issues in relation to proposals for a single sex school. The number of new schools of any type which are established in future will continue to depend on local circumstances.

Special Educational Needs

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps, in addition to research, the Government are taking to address the over-representation of some minority ethnic groups among children who have been identified as having special educational needs; and if she will make a statement. [55960]

Maria Eagle: We have taken steps to consult with key professionals in this area in order to identify gaps in knowledge, gain an understanding of their professional experiences and develop further awareness of issues in relation to the incidence of special educational needs among minority ethnic groups. The Department has commissioned research to establish the existence of any links between ethnicity and special educational needs. We will consider carefully the results of our consultations and the findings of the research in order to identify the most appropriate ways of addressing any issues of over-representation of some minority ethnic groups among children with special educational needs.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children with a special educational need who had been excluded from school were readmitted in the last period for which figures are available. [58941]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of exclusions for children with a special educational need have been referred to the Special Educational Need and Disability Tribunal. [58942]

Jacqui Smith: Since September 2002, when the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal first heard claims of disability discrimination, they have registered eight cases involving permanent exclusion and 53 cases involving fixed period exclusions from school. These are listed by year in the following table.

Type of exclusion	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Permanent	3	4	1
Fixed period	10	16	27

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children with a special educational need have been given an individual education plan. [58944]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in England have a special educational needs co-ordinating officer. [58945]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally. Under The Education (Special Educational Needs) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999 the governing body of every maintained mainstream school must publish prescribed information, including the name of the person who is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of education for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), whether or not the person is known as the SEN co-ordinator.

Staff Vetting

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what staff *(a)* vetting procedures and *(b)* mandatory criminal investigation checks are in place to safeguard children who attend (i) after school clubs held off school premises, (ii) drop-in crêches and nurseries and (iii) holiday clubs. [48379]

Ruth Kelly: Ofsted registers after school clubs, creches, nurseries and holiday clubs which cater for children under the age of eight. As part of the registration process, Ofsted undertakes a range of checks on the person providing the facility and the person in day-to-day charge to ensure that they are suitable to look after children. These checks include identity checks, checks through the Criminal Records

Bureau, checks with the person's GP, and checks against local authority social services records. During inspection Ofsted checks that the registered person has appropriate systems in place for Criminal Records Bureau checks for all new employees.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, introduced on 28 February 2006 will provide the legislative framework for a new vetting and barring scheme. This scheme will include those working in childcare not registered by Ofsted, such as childcare for children aged over eight. Under the new scheme, where work, either paid and unpaid, involves frequent teaching, caring for or otherwise working closely with children, the employer will be required to check employees are not barred from working with children, and will be committing an offence if they employ a person so barred.

Sure Start

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on *(a)* Sure Start and Children's Fund regional teams and *(b)* the Sure Start task force in each year since 1999; and what the estimated expenditure is for the next three years. [59082]

Beverley Hughes: The role of the Sure Start and Children's Fund regional teams is to support and monitor the delivery of Sure Start and the Children's Fund by Local Authorities. The available administration expenditure figures for these teams are set out in Table 1. Part of the role of these teams has been transferred to Government Offices from April 2006. My Department is considering how best to deliver support to Local Authorities in rolling out Children's Centres in the period from now to 2010.

Table 1: Administration Expenditure for Sure Start and Children's Fund regional teams

	Sure Start/Children's Fund (£ million)
2000–01	0.76
2001–02	1.47
2002–03	3.16
2003–04	4.03
2004–05	4.82
2005–06	4.50

Notes:

1. The figure for 2005–06 is an estimate.
2. Children's Fund figures are included from 2003–04 onwards.

The Sure Start Taskforce was set up in April 2005. There are currently 11 consultants in the Taskforce and their role is to support particular Local Authorities with issues related to the delivery of Sure Start. The budget for the Taskforce for the financial year 2005–06 was £800,000. The taskforce will be dissolved on 31 March 2006.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many under-fives have participated in the Sure Start programme in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England since the programme's inception; [59644]

(2) many under-fives entitled to free places on the Sure Start scheme are on waiting lists in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England; [59616]

(3) how many empty places there are in Sure Start nurseries in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England. [59617]

Beverley Hughes: Sure Start local programmes offer services to children under 4 years of age. Programmes were set up between 1999 and 2003. Information about the number of children seen is available from 2001 but is incomplete because reporting, in the early stages of the programme, from some programmes was irregular.

There are no Sure Start local programmes in the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood. The London borough of Hillingdon has one Sure Start local programme covering a 'catchment' area where 640 children under 4 live. This programme saw 593 children[1] between 2001 and 2005. There are 96 Sure Start local programmes in London. There are around 88,500 children under 4 in the 'catchment' areas for these programmes. 60,406[1] children were seen between 2001 and 2005. There are 524 Sure Start local programmes in England. There are over 420,000 children under 4 living in the 'catchment' areas for these programmes. 249,954[1] children were seen between 2001 and 2005.

Information on the number of children on waiting lists for Sure Start services or empty places in Sure Start nurseries is not collected centrally.

[1] *Source:*

Sure Start Local Programmes monitoring returns between 2001 and 2005. The dataset is incomplete, and therefore presents a partial view only, as some programmes did not submit regular returns across the whole period.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what projects in Aylesbury constituency have received Sure Start funding; how much each received; and over what period of time the funding was paid in each case. [59713]

Beverley Hughes: There are no Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) in the Aylesbury constituency. However, within Buckinghamshire local authority, there is a SSLP situated in Wycombe. The authority also receives funding for Sure Start Children's Centres and it decides, in consultation with its delivery partners, how and where the funding is spent within its area. Funding for each of the programmes was as follows:

£

	Sure Start Local Programme Revenue	*Children's Centres Revenue, Buckinghamshire*	*Children's Centres Capital, Buckinghamshire*
2002–03	114,500	—	—
2003–04	426,500	—	—
2004–05	688,500	49,839	3,525
2005–06	810,000	83,666	146,475

In addition, the SSLP in Wycombe was allocated capital of £835,000. This is not included in the table as it was not allocated to specific financial years.

Training Schools

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many schools in the *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary sector are training schools; [59297]

(2) how many schools in the *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary sector are to be designated as training schools in 2007. [59324]

Jacqui Smith: There are currently 244 operational Training Schools—195 secondary and 49 primary. From 2005, high performing specialist schools are able to apply for secondary Training School status at specialist re-designation; 16 new Training Schools will become operational from 1 April. Primary schools will no longer be able to apply directly for Training School status, but the Training and Development Agency are currently considering the development of a primary initiative.

There are no set targets for 2007.

High performing specialist schools applying for specialist re-designation will be given the opportunity to apply for Training School status beginning in 2007.

Trust Schools

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which features of proposed new trust schools will help raise standards at Clayton Hall Business and Language College in Newcastle-under-Lyme. [59209]

Jacqui Smith: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him in reply to the same question he asked about Wolstanton High School and Sir Thomas Boughey High School, given on 13 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 1881W. The same potential benefits apply to Clayton Hall Business and Language College.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Visit (Bexley)

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Leader of the House what the itinerary was for his recent visit to Bexley borough. [58886]

Mr. Hoon: The itinerary was as follows:

Meeting at the United Reform Church Hall, Geddes Place, Bexleyheath

Meeting with members of Bexley Youth Council and sixth formers

Met pensioners at the Royal British Legion.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

21. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the backlog of cases at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. [59244]

Mr. McNulty: We will continue with the wide range of measures being introduced under our five year strategy. Through these measures we will speed up decision making, introduce tighter border control and new visa regimes and increasingly apply fast track processes to determine straightforward cases. For example, our continuing success in reducing asylum intake will enable us to process older cases and the Points Based System will introduce a more efficient application process.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum claims have been processed under each of the late and opportunistic and non-suspensive appeal segments of the New Asylum Model since 20 June; and what the outcome was in each case. [20497]

Mr. McNulty: As at 20 October the Asylum Casework Information Database (ACID) recorded 70 cases as having been taken into the New Asylum Model (NAM) segments which relate to potentially non-suspensive appeals (Segment 3) and to late and opportunistic claims with low barriers to removal (Segment 4), with 65 case outcomes.

These break down as follows:

	Number	
Case outcome	*Segment 3*	*Segment 4*
Asylum refusal	5	55
Granted	—	10
Humanitarian protection/ discretionary leave	*	*

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claimants awaiting a decision were wearing an electronic tag on 31 December 2005. [47484]

Mr. McNulty: On 31 December 2005 there were a total of 71 asylum claimants wearing an electronic tag. Of those, 12 were awaiting a decision on their claim.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the removal of failed asylum seekers. [59236]

Mr. McNulty: We have taken some very important steps forward in recent weeks, by significantly increasing the number of removals, and now believe we have reached the point where they exceed the number of unfounded applications. We will validate these figures and release them in due course. This represents a fantastic achievement in performance in comparison to past years.

Data-mining

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Government policy on the practice of data-mining. [59227]

Andy Burnham: The practice of data-mining, which I understand to be a tool to help establish relationships in large databases of information, can be valuable in protecting the public. However, there must always be appropriate checks and balances to prevent the misuse of personal data.

Equality/Diversity

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to promote equality and diversity within his Department. [59238]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office is promoting equality, fairness and respect through a 5-year programme of action to drive forward an integrated and systematic approach to race equality and diversity in leadership, staff management and business delivery across the Home Office Group. The programme also supports the work to achieve Cabinet Office diversity targets for SCS and feeder grades and action on the Cabinet Office 10 Point Plan for delivering a diverse civil service.

Abdel Karim Taqhouti

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the determination of 14 September by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal in respect of Abdel Karim Taqhouti, appeal number OA/00652/2005, was not sent to the UK embassy in Tunis until 31 October; and if he will make a statement. [29617]

Mr. McNulty: The determination was forwarded to the British embassy in Tunis on 21 September by diplomatic bag.

Child Abuse

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 928W, on child abuse, what powers the police have *(a)* to issue a risk of sexual harm order where the offender has been cautioned for the sexual abuse of a child committed more than 50 years ago and *(b)* to investigate an individual who confesses to an offence of child abuse committed over 50 years ago to determine whether the offender is a risk to children or has committed any subsequent acts of child abuse. [57277]

Paul Goggins: The police can apply to a magistrate's court for a risk of sexual harm order in respect of any adult aged 18 or over who, on at least two occasions, has engaged in sexually explicit conduct or communication with a child or children. The defendant does not need to have a conviction for a sexual or any other offence but, by virtue of section 127 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980, at least part of the behaviour causing concern must have taken place in the six months prior to the application being made. The police have the power to investigate any individual about whom an allegation is made or where there is evidence of any offence having been committed, regardless of whether or not the person has offended previously.

Child Immigrants (Detention)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were detained with their families for immigration purposes in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* November 2005. [58856]

Mr. McNulty: The number of children with their families detained solely under Immigration Act Powers is not available. It would be available only by examination of manual records at disproportionate costs.

Child Protection

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1090W on child protection, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in the number of cautions given for possession of an indecent photograph of a child between 2002 and 2003. [51665]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* The issuing of simple cautions is an operational matter for the police. No analysis has been made of the reason for the increase in cautions at that particular time, although the number of those prosecuted also rose during the same period.

Number of defendants cautioned, those proceeded against at magistrates courts and those found guilty at all courts for offences relating to child pornography, England and Wales, 1982–2004[1]

Offence description/disposal	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*
Take or make indecent photographs of children[2]												
Cautioned	0	n/a	2	1	1	n/a	n/a	5	10	10	10	7
Proceeded against	9	12	18	22	10	23	32	44	44	40	46	42
Found guilty	12	12	19	24	11	29	31	39	35	39	44	37
Possession of an indecent photograph of a child[3]												
Cautioned	*	*	*	*	*	*	n/a	2	5	3	13	4
Proceeded against	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	21	36	53	43	48
Found guilty	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	16	32	43	30	35

Offence description/disposal	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Take or make indecent photographs of children[2]											
Cautioned	6	18	15	14	26	31	35	38	63	239	201
Proceeded against	40	53	80	111	116	175	284	398	582	1,464	1,097
Found guilty	27	44	69	103	82	139	218	289	434	1,048	978
Possession of an indecent photograph of a child[3]											
Cautioned	7	11	16	17	19	34	25	[4]32	53	205	162
Proceeded against	53	60	125	124	167	163	129	[4]128	156	326	200
Found guilty	36	37	79	81	105	99	77	[4]75	97	239	184

n/a = not available.

* = not applicable

[1] All data given refer to the principal offence only. Data may include persons proceeded against in earlier years or for a different offence.
[2] Offences under the Protection of Children Act 1978, section 1 and section 6 as amended by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, section 84.
[3] Offences under the Criminal Justice Act 1988, section 160 as amended by the Criminal Justice and Services Act 2000, section 41(3). (previously 181/06)
[4] Amendments in figures made as this offence became an indictable offence during this period.
Source:
Offending and Criminal Justice Group (RDS)
Ref: IOS 391–05

Compensation Orders

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many compensation orders were imposed upon offenders in Weston-super-Mare in each of the last five years; and how many of these were not paid in each year. [34166]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on compensation orders imposed is contained in the table. Information about non-payment of compensation orders is not collected centrally.

Compensation orders at Weston-super-mare magistrates court

	Number of offenders given compensation orders
2004	214
2003	260
2002	230
2001	231
2000	196

Source:
RDS—OCJR 02/12/2005

Crime (Uxbridge)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* support services and *(b)* training are available to help children of school age who have been convicted of a crime in (i) Uxbridge constituency, (ii) the London borough of Hillingdon, (iii) Greater London and (iv) England. [53644]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Hurd) on 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1152W.

Departmental Staff

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's headquarters head count was at *(a)* 1 May 2004, *(b)* 1 May 2005 and *(c)* 1 November 2005; and if he will make a statement. [34324]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The head count for the Department's headquarters is contained in the table. Also the figures submitted to include IND HQ (and all Home Office HQ) but does not include operational front line staff.

Headquarters headcount data for the actual dates specified is not available but please refer to the table.

Headquarters headcount

	Full-time equivalent headquarters post
12 March 2004	9,896
30 April 2005	8,835
31 October 2005	8,697

Drug Testing

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for extending drug testing on arrest. [59377]

Paul Goggins: Drug testing on arrest under powers introduced by the Drugs Act 2005 was successfully implemented in three police force areas on 1 December 2005. The provision will be implemented in the remaining Drug Interventions Programme "intensive" areas in England on 31 March 2006 from which date a total of over 170 custody suites will be testing on arrest.

European Anti-crime Measures

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases have been referred from the UK to *(a)* Europol and *(b)* Eurojust in each of the last five calendar years. [35645]

Andy Burnham: The United Kingdom's competent authorities do not refer cases to Europol. It does not have police powers and does not itself carry out criminal investigations. It is an intelligence agency which supports member states' own investigations into serious organised crime by analysing and exchanging the information and intelligence which they provide.

Information in respect of Eurojust, the EU judicial co-operation unit, is available for 2001–04 and is set out in the following table. Eurojust was established on a provisional basis on 1 March 2001. The Council Decision formally establishing Eurojust was adopted on 28 February 2002 and Eurojust moved into its headquarters in The Hague in December 2002.

United Kingdom Eurojust cases

	Cases referred by the UK
2001	9
2002	20
2003	35
2004	42

Football Banning Orders

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of football banning orders; and if he will make a statement. [59195]

Paul Goggins: A comprehensive strategy for tackling football disorder was introduced in the wake of the serious disorder during Euro 2000. The football banning order law and enforcement arrangements are the cornerstone of that strategy and have proved highly effective in helping to reduce levels of English and Welsh football disorder. The impact of banning orders and the wider strategy is detailed in a Home Office report Football (Disorder) Act 2000: Report to Parliament, copies of which were placed in the House Library on 20 January 2006.

Forensic Practitioners (Complaints)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedure is to be followed by an individual who has a complaint regarding the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners. [45520]

Andy Burnham: The Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners is a company limited by guarantee. It is not part of the Home Office and, while the Home Secretary supports the work of the council and is represented on the council, it is not answerable to or under the direction of the Home Secretary.

Should an individual have concerns with the work of the council the appropriate course of action would be to raise these with the council.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those released under the Home Detention Curfew Scheme have reoffended, broken down by *(a)* crime committed on release and *(b)* crime originally imprisoned for. [21843]

Fiona Mactaggart: As of 31 October 2005 over 119,000 prisoners have been released on the scheme since it was introduced in January 1999, of whom 4,095 have been notified to the Home Office as convicted, cautioned or awaiting prosecution for a further offence committed whilst subject to Home Detention Curfew (HDC). Table 1 gives a breakdown by original index offence (the more or most serious index offence in the case of those offenders who had committed multiple offences) of these 4,095 offenders. Table 2 gives a breakdown of the total number of further offences for which offenders have been convicted, cautioned or are currently awaiting prosecution during the period of HDC.

Table 1: Breakdown of index offences of those who have committed further offences

28 January 1999 to 31 October 2005	*Total*
Total	4,095
Violent against the person	456
Sexual offences	0
Burglary	650
Robbery	258
Theft and handling	858
Fraud and forgery	121
Drug offences	353
Motoring offences	594
Other	805

Table 2: Breakdown of all further offences committed by those released on HDC

28 January 1999 to 31 October 2005	*Total*
Total	7,119
Violent against the person	886
Sexual offences	18
Burglary	337
Robbery	100
Theft and handling	1,780
Fraud and forgery	252
Drug offences	589
Motoring offences	1,735
Other	1,422

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost per week per prisoner of the home detention curfew scheme. [59139]

Fiona Mactaggart: The weekly cost of electronically monitoring a prisoner released on the Home Detention Curfew scheme is about £68.

Intensive Supervision and Surveillance

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of young offenders who took part in the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme re-offended within two years in each police authority area. [28286]

Fiona Mactaggart: The only source of reconviction data for the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme is the 24 month reconviction study carried out by Oxford University for the Youth Justice Board, which does not cover all police areas. This was published on 24 October 2005, and a copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Leave to Remain

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measure of *(a)* length of academic year and *(b)* hours per academic year the Department used in calculating the 15 hours minimum time that a student must spend in organised study per week when applying for leave to remain as a student. [58895]

Mr. McNulty: The rationale behind the minimum of 15 hours organised day time study is to help ensure that a migrant's primary purpose in being in the UK is for study as a full-time student. It has been in the Immigration Rules since 1983 and is also consistent with DfES definitions of full-time study.

People Trafficking

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent estimate he has made of the number of children who are trafficked into the United Kingdom illegally in a year; and if he will make a statement. [40654]

Paul Goggins: There have been a number of recent investigations into the extent of the problem of trafficking in children, including reports by the

Metropolitan police service, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office and from interested non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Home Office officials believe that, due to the highly covert nature of this criminal activity, we do not as yet fully understand the scale of trafficking into or within the UK. Consequently no reliable estimates of the numbers of trafficked children exist.

On 5 January the Home Office launched a public consultation document, "Tackling Human Trafficking—Consultation on Proposals for a UK Action Plan". The consultation aims to increase our knowledge and understanding of all forms of trafficking, including the trafficking of children. Home Office officials are also currently considering further research proposals and working closely with other Departments and NGOs on ways in which identification, assessment and protection of child trafficking victims might be improved. This will enable more reliable data and estimates of numbers to be collated.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of people with a learning disability in prisons; and if he will make a statement. [58210]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not currently collated centrally by the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office or the Prison Service. However, the Prison Service has recently amended its Local Inmate Database System to record prisoner disability, including separate indicators for dyslexia, mental health, learning difficulties and physical or sensory impairments. This data has yet to be gathered on the existing prison population.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Prison Service spent on *(a)* television sets and *(b)* Sony playstations for the use of prisoners in each of the last three financial years for which figures are available. [59138]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is only available for the last two financial years. The expenditure for television sets also includes the amount spent on televisions used outside of cells. In-cell televisions are paid for out of rental money collected from prisoners and not from Prison Service funds. The expenditure only takes account of money spent with the current contractor. Figures for expenditure outside the central contract are not available.

Expenditure on television sets and playstations in public sector prisons in England and Wales between 2004–05 and 2005–06

£

	Spend for:	
	2004–05	2005–06
Television	43,730.10	53,523.14
Sony Playstation	499.98	1,297.30

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the changes in skills required for the staff working in prison management over the last 20 years; and if he will make a statement. [58648]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is sustained investment in management and leadership skills from first line manager upwards flowing from the Professionalising the Prison Service project and forming the key foundation for work on leadership planning and management.

The Prison Service strategy for leadership and management development is designed to enhance the quality, diversity and effectiveness of senior operational managers in order that they meet their key performance targets. Development is evidence based, tailored to individual need and is aligned with the promotion process.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list prisons which have a mother and baby unit; what the capacity of each is; and if he will make a statement. [59196]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are currently seven mother and baby units, which are listed in the following table. Each may accommodate a set of twins.

Prison establishments in England and Wales with mother and baby units

Establishment	Capacity
Askham Grange	10
Bronzefield	12
Eastwood Park	12
Holloway	13
New Hall	9
Peterborough	12
Styal	11

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many incidents of self harm there have been at each prison in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement; [57770]

(2) how many inmates *(a)* committed suicide and *(b)* attempted suicide but were resuscitated at each prison in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [57772]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested will be place in the Libraries of the House.

Same Sex Civil Partnerships

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the extent to which same sex civil partnerships undertaken abroad are recognised in the United Kingdom. [57119]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have carried out research to inform a list of specified countries whose same sex relationships will be recognised as civil partnerships in the United Kingdom. This list is in Schedule 20 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

The overseas relationships listed are those that meet certain criteria demonstrating that they are similar in nature to a civil partnership. Overseas relationships which do not feature on the list can also be recognised provided that they meet certain 'general conditions' which are specified in the Act.

Silverland, Chertsey (Costs)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost, and average monthly cost, to date has been to the Government for *(a)* building works and *(b)* security provisions at Silverlands, Chertsey. [54468]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

From October 1999 to the date of sale the Government spent £3,175,000 (average £46,691 per month) on building and maintenance works and £1,770,000 (average £26,029 per month) on site security relating to Silverlands.

The property was sold by the Department on 23 May 2005.

Stolen Property (Recovery Costs)

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money was raised in each of the last three years by police forces charging victims of car theft for the return of their vehicles. [57978]

Paul Goggins: There is no distinct charge on the victims of car theft for the return of their vehicles. The police have powers to order the removal of any vehicle that is dangerously, obstructively or illegal parked, broken down or abandoned, including vehicles abandoned after being stolen. Before owners can regain any vehicle so removed, they are required by law to pay charges prescribed by the Secretary of State to meet the costs. The charges are currently £105 for the removal and £12 for each storage period of 24 hours. Information on the total value of charges levied and the circumstances in which they were levied is not collected centrally.

Work Permits

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued to individuals working in sport in each of the last five years; and in which *(a)* sports and *(b)* area of employment the individuals concerned were employed. [58476]

Mr. McNulty: The following table shows the total number of work permits issued to individuals working in sport in the last five years. Listed as the occupations individuals were employed in and the specific areas within the sport.

Occupation code	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total*
American football coach	10	7	13	7	0	37
American football player	67	8	17	59	0	151
American football technician	1	1	0	5	0	7
Basketball coach	6	3	4	5	1	19
Basketball development officer	1	0	0	0	0	1
Basketball player	75	75	105	91	75	421
Boxer	23	9	18	19	19	88
Boxing coach	0	1	0	1	1	3
Coach (other)	52	46	50	42	15	205
Commentator	0	3	4	6	5	18
Cricket coach	21	16	27	34	24	122
Cricket player	409	524	507	421	328	2,189
Cricket player/coach	0	0	0	58	121	179
Football manager/coach	0	0	1	0	0	1
Football player	53	49	52	49	49	252
Groom	285	149	515	424	43	1,416
Gymnast	2	1	0	2	0	5
Gymnasts coach	26	22	16	16	18	98
Hockey coach	2	4	3	2	4	15
Hockey player	1	7	6	7	14	35
Ice hockey coach	4	4	2	2	2	14
Ice hockey player	64	82	61	45	50	302
Ice skater	1	0	0	0	1	2
Ice skater coach	2	0	0	0	0	2
Jockey	8	1	5	6	7	27
Jockey (work rider)	16	5	3	1	2	27
Kabbadi player	0	0	0	72	81	153
Lacrosse development officer	36	38	44	46	48	212
Lacrosse player	0	0	0	0	0	0
Martial arts	2	9	4	7	12	34
Motor sports driver	19	18	19	13	17	86
Other sports related occupation	29	71	92	100	24	316
Polo groom	0	0	0	354	698	1,052
Polo player	53	105	101	104	100	463
Polo trainer	30	60	57	64	26	237
Presenter	2	1	0	0	0	3
Racquet sport coach	0	0	0	6	8	14
Racquet sport player	7	10	3	4	1	25
Rugby league coach	4	3	3	1	6	17
Rugby league player	51	50	50	36	48	235
Rugby union coach	6	10	5	12	6	39
Rugby union player	62	68	35	42	52	259

Occupation code	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total*
Snooker player	17	18	15	1	7	58
Snow sports related occupation	0	4	1	0	0	5
Speedway	37	34	31	29	10	141
Water sports related occupation	1	3	3	4	6	17
Wrestler	0	0	1	8	4	13
Total	1,485	1,519	1,873	2,205	1,933	9,015

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance is available to people seeking *(a)* work permits and *(b)* visas to come to the UK to take up employment in sport. [58477]

Mr. McNulty: There is comprehensive guidance available for people seeking a work permit. There is a specific set of guidance for sports and entertainment with a detailed section on employment in sport. This guidance is maintained and updated twice yearly and can be obtained in a hard copy from a distribution centre or from the Work Permits (UK) website www.workingintheuk.gov.uk.

For sports people who are wishing to come to the UK temporarily to take part in a competition it may not be necessary to obtain a work permit. Guidance on this can be found on the immigration and nationality directorate website www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

For sports people who wish to apply for a visa there is hard copy guidance from UKvisas in the UKvisas booklet on work permits, and electronically in the diplomatic service procedures on the UKvisas website www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what cost benefit analysis he has conducted of the Access to Work scheme; and if he will make a statement. [56899]

Mrs. McGuire: In 2004–05 around 32,000 people benefited from Access to Work compared with fewer than 13,000 in 1997–98, when the budget was £14.6 million compared to £60 million in 2006–07.

For every individual helped by Access to Work there is a net benefit to the Exchequer of almost £1,400.

For every individual helped by Access to Work there is a net benefit to the Economy of almost £3,000.

Access to Work is administered by 11 Regional Access to Work Business Centres, each of which is responsible for its own part of the total budget. The Business Centres ensure value for money by arranging local contracts for goods and services, the details of which are given to disabled customers as required.

Benefits (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Coventry, South received *(a)* widow's benefit, *(b)* housing benefit, *(c)* council tax credit and *(d)* income support in each year since 1997. [58908]

Mr. Plaskitt: Widows benefit is not available broken down geographically prior to 1999. Housing benefit and council tax benefit figures are not available broken down by parliamentary constituency; local authority figures have been provided.

The available information is in the tables.

Widows benefit and bereavement benefit claimants in the Coventry, South parliamentary constituency: each August 1999 to 2005

	Widows Benefit	*Bereavement Benefit*
August 1999	400	n/a
August 2000	400	n/a
August 2001	400	n/a
August 2002	300	100
August 2003	300	100
August 2004	200	100
August 2005	300	100

n/a = figures are not applicable.

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Bereavement Benefit, which replaced Widows Benefit for new claims, was introduced in April 2001.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit caseloads: Coventry city council; each August from 1997 to 2005.

	Housing benefit	*Council tax benefit*
August 1997	26,200	37,900
August 1998	25,700	36,800
August 1999	24,300	33,100
August 2000	23,300	33,500
August 2001	21,400	31,100
August 2002	21,100	30,400
August 2003	21,200	29,900
August 2004	21,500	30,800
August 2005	21,600	32,100

Notes:

1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.

Source:

Housing benefit and council tax benefit management information system quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in August 1997 to August 2005.

Income support claimants (excluding minimum income guarantee) in the Coventry, South parliamentary constituency; each August from 1997 to 2005

	Number
August 1997	4,200
August 1998	4,400
August 1999	4,100
August 2000	4,200
August 2001	4,200
August 2002	4,100
August 2003	4,200
August 2004	4,100
August 2005	3,900

Notes:

1. Figures for August 1999 to August 2005 are from the DWP 100 per cent. Work and Pensions longitudinal study, whilst figures for August 1997 and August 1998 are derived by applying 5 per cent. proportions to 100 per cent. totals.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Income Support figures exclude minimum income guarantee (MIG); pension credit replaced MIG on the 6 October 2003 and ended IS entitlement to customers aged 60 +. Pension credit cases are not included in the figures in the table.

Source:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. samples.

Departmental Procurement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he has taken to achieve savings in procurement processes within *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the agencies for which he has responsibility in the last three years. [51992]

Mrs. McGuire: The steps taken by the Department for Work and Pensions to achieve savings in procurement processes are delivered through a commercial strategy that applies to the entire Department, its agencies and associated non-departmental public bodies (NDBPs). The steps include:

> collaborating and sharing best practice on procurement with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and across the public sector. The Department leads cross-Government deals for stationery and postal services and recently successfully led procurement for public sector-wide frameworks for travel services including rail, air/ferry, car hire, hotels and conferences;
>
> expanding use of purchasing cards and e-commerce to improve the efficiency of the purchasing process. 80 per cent. of low value purchasing transactions are now processed electronically and all low value transactions will be traded electronically by 2007;

a programme to develop procurement skills, with 75 per cent. of staff in specialist procurement posts CIPS qualified and the introduction of a Delegated Procurement Authority (DPA) to ensure all procurements are supported by suitably trained and experienced staff; and

strategic relationship management of key suppliers such as EDS, BT, Land Securities Trillium and Royal Mail Group. A supplier performance index is being introduced for all key suppliers.

Through these steps and others the Department has made the biggest contribution of all Departments to support OGC in exceeding its SR00 and SR02 PSA targets. The Department has reported improving procurement Value For Money (VFM) gains for the last four years. In 2004–05 it reported procurement VFM gains of £326.4 million to OGC; this was 7.6 per cent. of the Department's total commercial spend of £4,289 million and 29.5 per cent. of the total reported by all Departments.

Household Income

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what statistics his Government have produced on the persistence of poverty at levels below the 50 per cent. and 40 per cent. median income lines. [56034]

Margaret Hodge: No official statistics have been produced on these measures.

The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators including the persistence of low income using low-income thresholds of 60 per cent. of median household income, and 70 per cent. of median household income.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what statistics the Government collects that are broken down by £10 bands of equivalised weekly household income. [56035]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is published in 'Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2004–05' copies of which are available in the Library.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what statistics the Government collects on sources of income broken down by level of income; [56036]

(2) what statistics the Government collates on income sources as a proportion of net income. [56039]

Margaret Hodge: The Family Resources Survey, a national survey of households, collects information on levels and all sources of income and is recognised as the best source of information on income. The General Household Survey, and the Expenditure and Food Survey also collect information on the source and level of income but in less detail.

The Family Resources Survey; The General Household Survey; and The Expenditure and Food Survey are in the Library.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of people had an income below 40 per cent. of median income in each year since 1997 *(a)* before and *(b)* after housing costs. [56041]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is not available.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress he has made with his plans to reform incapacity benefit; and if he will make a statement. [57329]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 13 March 2006]*: We believe that the opportunity to work is a right and that it is as important as the right to equal treatment or access to services. For too long, people on incapacity benefit have been written off as incapable of work and consigned to a life on benefit. We know that a large proportion want to work and so we want to ensure that they are given the opportunity to do so. We do not believe in writing anyone off.

On the 24 of January 2006 we published our Green Paper: "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work" which sets out our proposals for the reform of incapacity benefit. It is crucial that we get the details of these reforms right and the opinions of the public are very important. The publication of the welfare reform Green Paper began the official consultation phase, which will run until 21 April, and we invite feedback and suggestions from all interested parties as we look for the best way to move forward.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of new incapacity benefit claimants aged *(a)* over 50 years and *(b)* under 50 years ended their claim within six months (i) in the Pathways to Work pilot areas and (ii) in other areas in each year since the pilots began. [58688]

Margaret Hodge: The available information is in the table.

Proportion of incapacity benefit claimants ending their claim within six months

Percentage

	Aged under 50		*Aged 50 and over*	
Quarter	*Pathways to Work pilot areas*	*Other areas*	*Pathways to Work pilot areas*	*Other areas*
October to December 2003[1]	49	35	40	31
January to March 2004	46	33	36	29
April to June 2004	44	34	33	28
July to September 2004	43	34	31	28
October to December 2004	45	36	35	31
January to March 2005	44	36	33	30
April to May 2005[2]	44	36	33	29

[1] Figures are from 27 October 2003 when the first phase of the pilots started.

[2] Current benefits data does not allow six month off-flow analysis after May 2005.

Note:

1. Six month off-flows by quarter have been provided because data is only available for one full year.

2. Figures do not include a proportion of short-term incapacity benefit claims, which flow on and off between scan dates; the off-flows presented will be lower than actual rates, but trends over time will be consistent.

Source:

DWP—National Benefits Database

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's targets are for reducing incapacity benefit claimants for *(a)* 2007, *(b)* 2008, *(c)* 2009, *(d)* 2010 and *(e)* 2011. [59686]

Mrs. McGuire: In January we published our Green Paper: "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering people to work", which set out our proposal to significantly reduce the number of people claiming incapacity benefits. These include proposals to improve workplace health, reform of the gateway onto benefits, increased support for claimants and removing the perverse incentives in the system.

While it is difficult to model the precise impact of these measures, the Green Paper set out our aspiration to reduce the number of claimants of incapacity benefits by one million over the course of the decade through the combined efforts of the Government, employers, local authorities and health professionals.

The information requested is not available, as we have not set formal targets for reducing the IB caseload in the years 2007 to 2011.

New Deal

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of job entrants from the new deal in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 was back on benefit within 13 weeks. [54970]

Margaret Hodge: 14 per cent. of new deal job entrants between January 2004 and December 2004 and 13 per cent. of new deal job entrants between January 2005 and August 2005 had started a new benefit claim within 13 weeks of the job start.

Note:

Latest benefit data are to November 2005 and, therefore, to allow for a 13 week gap, only new deal job entrants between January 2004 and August 2005 have been included.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of new deal for young people leavers took up *(a)* unsubsidised and *(b)* subsidised employment in (i) the private sector, (ii) the public sector and (iii) the voluntary and social enterprise sector in each year since the programme began. [56969]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the sector in which either a subsidised or unsubsidised job is gained through new deal for young people is not available.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what percentage of participants in the *(a)* new deal 25 plus and *(b)* new deal for young people programmes who started the programmes (i) once, (ii) twice, (iii) three times, (iv) four times and (v) more than four times were educated to (A) GCSE, (B) NVQ, (C) A level and (D) degree level in each year since the programmes began; [56971]

(2) what percentage of *(a)* new deal 25 plus and *(b)* new deal for young people leavers who left the programme and commenced (i) employment, (ii) a combination of employment and benefits and (iii) claiming benefits had been educated to (A) GCSE, (B) NVQ, (C) A level and (D) degree level in each year since the scheme began. [56975]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* people and *(b)* over 25s in Beverley and Holderness who left the New Deal have found a sustained job in each year since its inception. [52339]

Margaret Hodge: The measure of sustainability for jobs gained when leaving the New Deal programme differs across the New Deals. In the case of New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus, employment is regarded as sustained if a person gaining a job through these New Deals does not claim Jobseeker's Allowance for at least 13 weeks after gaining employment and leaving the programme.

Employment sustainability for those participating on New Deal for Lone Parents is measured by employment records held by H.M Revenue and this measure has been used since October 2005. If a person leaves New Deal for Lone Parents to a job, and they are recorded through Revenue records as still being in that job 13 weeks later, their employment is recorded as sustained.

A measure of job sustainability for New Deal 50 plus and New Deal for Partners is not available. Information on New Deal for Disabled People is not available at constituency level.

The available information is in the table.

New Deal in Beverley and Holderness—leavers to sustained employment

	People leaving New Deal to sustained employment[1]	*of which, left New Deal 25 plus to sustained employment*[2]
April to December 1998	60	—
January to December 1999	220	—
January to December 2000	170	—
January to December 2001	210	20
January to December 2002	180	40
January to December 2003	200	50
January to December 2004	210	40
January to August 2005	100	20

Notes:

1. Includes people who have left New Deal for Young People since January 1998 and New Deal for Lone Parents since October 2005 to sustained employment. Also includes people who have left New Deal 25 plus since April 2001 to sustained employment.

2. The immediate destination of people leaving New Deal 25 plus is only available from April 2001.

3. Latest available data is to August 2005.

4. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Information Directorate, DWP

Christine Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people in Chester have participated in the New Deal. [58702]

Margaret Hodge: The information is in the table.

New Deal for Young People in the City of Chester

	Number
Individuals starting New Deal for Young People[1]	950
Individuals into work through New Deal for Young People[2]	590

[1] Latest data to the end of November 2005.

[2] Latest data to the end of August 2005.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions Information Directorate

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many work-focused interviews have been carried out by his Department under the new deal for lone parents *(a)* in each year since the inception of the programme and *(b)* in each of the last 12 calendar months, broken down by the respective qualifying period for interviews under the scheme. [57287]

Margaret Hodge: New deal for lone parents started in October 1998. All lone parents claiming income support are invited to attend a voluntary meeting with a personal adviser. This meeting is known as a new deal for lone parents initial interview and so far 1,158,000 have been held.

In April 2001 mandatory meetings for lone parents were introduced, known as work focused interviews. Work focused interviews are conducted at the outset of the benefit claim and at set points during the claim, usually six months, 12 months and then annually. The frequency can also depend on the age of the youngest child, and the lone parent's duration on benefit. For example, quarterly work focused interviews are currently being introduced nationally for lone parents who have been claiming income support for more than 12 months, and who have a youngest child aged 14 or 15.

There have been 2,217,900 lone parent work focused interviews, the figures for each year and for the last 12 months are in the tables.

Lone Parent Work Focused Interviews

	Initial interviews	*6 month review meetings*	*Annual review meetings*
April 2001-March 2002	124,200	—	—
April 2002-March 2003	244,300	18,400	24,300
April 2003-March 2004	388,100	56,200	82,800
April 2004-March 2005	382,000	98,900	212,100
April 2005-December 2005	303,500	83,600	199,500
Total	1,442,200	257,100	518,700

Lone parent work focused interviews January to December 2005

As at 2005:	*Initial interviews*	*6 month review meetings*	*Annual review meetings*
January	34,700	10,000	20,200
February	34,900	9,500	22,100
March	35,200	10,300	23,500
April	31,900	9,800	19,300
May	31,000	9,200	19,600
June	33,200	9,300	23,600
July	31,300	8,800	22,100
August	37,300	9,600	20,600
September	41,500	9,600	22,200
October	35,700	9,500	24,000
November	34,200	10,600	28,500
December	27,400	7,200	19,500
Total	408,300	113,400	265,200

Notes:

1. Figures refer to total number of work focused interviews attended.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred; therefore the totals may not be a sum of the elements.

Source:

National Lone Parent Evaluation database (0512).

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average waiting time was for a work-focused interview under the new deal for lone parents in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many benefit recipients who should have received such an interview have not received one. [57288]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the average waiting time for a lone parent work focused interview is not available. As we do not collect details on cases where an appointment is rearranged. However, 50 per cent. of lone parents attend their interview within seven days.

A work focused interview is arranged for all new and repeat lone parent customers within days of making a new claim to benefit, as attendance at the interview forms part of their conditions for entitlement. Those lone parents who were already claiming benefit before the work focused interview regime was introduced (April 2001), and who are still claiming, are being brought into the regime over time with all lone parents being brought into the new regime by March 2006. At the end of February 2006, 22,500 lone parents in receipt of benefit in this category had not yet been brought into the new regime.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what future role he envisages for the private and voluntary sectors in the provision of pathways to work services. [55068]

Margaret Hodge: To achieve our aspiration of an 80 per cent. employment rate the reach, expertise and flexibility that the private and voluntary sectors can provide will be key.

Our current programmes for all client groups are delivered by providers from the voluntary and private sectors. This includes new deal for disabled people and pathways to work.

As we set out in the recent Welfare Reform Green Paper, we want to continue to engage private and voluntary sector providers and will invite those providers to manage pathways to work services as we roll out the programme across the country.

This will allow new and innovative approaches to be tested while ensuring that quality support is available to a wide range of claimants, delivered with maximum flexibility.

Poverty

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the evidential basis is for the change in the Government's definition of poverty from 50 to 60 per cent. of average income. [57068]

Margaret Hodge: There has been no change in the way low income is measured.

The Government's first Child Poverty Spending Review 2002 public service agreement measure to reduce the number of children in poverty used 60 per cent. of median household income as the low income threshold. The Spending Review 2004 public service agreement measure also uses 60 per cent. of median household income.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of increasing either benefit or tax credit payments to levels which will bring all families with children below the poverty line to a position above the poverty line. [57839]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is not available.

Our long-term strategy to meet the child poverty target is not based exclusively on increasing financial support for families. Evidence clearly shows that work is the best route out of poverty for those who are able to work and our strategy focuses on policies to enable parents to participate in the labour market, as well as providing financial support.

The other element of the strategy is the delivery of excellent public services that improve the life chances of children living in poverty and help break the cycle of deprivation. Our child poverty strategy is set out in Opportunity for All and in the Child Poverty Review, published alongside the 2004 Spending Review White Paper.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of children in families with *(a)* a lone parent, *(b)* married parents or step-parents and *(c)* cohabiting parents or step-parents are in poverty; and what research he has conducted on the equivalent figures in other (i) EU and (ii) G8 countries. [57840]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information on children living in low income households in Great Britain by family type is available in the latest publication of the "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2004–05". The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The data requested is in the table.

Proportion of children by family type living in households with income less than 60 per cent. of contemporary median income, Great Britain, 2004–05

	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*
Lone parent	39	43
Married parents or married step-parents	15	19
Co-habiting parents or co-habiting step-parents	23	29

Source:
Family Resources Survey

The Department for Work and Pensions provides low-income figures for lone parent and couple families in the UK to the EU. The Department has not carried out specific research on equivalent figures for EU or G8 countries.

International comparisons are important because the Government aspire to be among the very best performers in Europe on child poverty, competing with the record of countries such as Sweden and Denmark. A focus on income before housing costs; as adopted in our Spending Review 2004 target; supports this, as this is used across other European Union countries.

"Measuring child poverty", published in December 2003, compares findings with our European Union counterparts. It showed that the UK had the highest child poverty rate in Europe in 1999 (29 per cent.) but, according to latest data for 2003, we are now closer to the EU average (23 per cent.). European comparisons are made using data from the European Household Panel Study, and are not comparable with figures using the Family Resources Survey. Data from 2003 remains the most up to date as this was the last year that data was produced for the UK using this dataset. UK comparisons across Europe will be measured using the European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EUSILC) from autumn 2005.

While we have not made comparisons across the G8 countries, "Child Poverty in Rich Nations 2005", a UNICEF report on child poverty highlights the progress we have started to make in halving child poverty by 2010 and eliminating it by 2020. The report also showed that the UK has made more progress on reducing child poverty than any other country in the OECD in the years from 1991 to 2000.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the proportion of single people of working age who are living in poverty; what target he has set for reducing this proportion; and if he will make a statement. [59347]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information on working age adults living in low income households in Great Britain by family type is available in the latest publication of 'Households Below Average Income (HBAI) 1994–95 to 2004–05'. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

According to this measure, and before housing costs, 17 per cent. of single people of working age without children are living in poverty, compared to 29 per cent. of single people of working age with children. After housing costs, the proportions are 22 per cent. and 47 per cent. respectively.

We do not have a specific target for this group as, overall, working age adults are less likely to be on relative low-income than children or pensioners. Our priorities reflect these facts and focus on the most vulnerable groups.

Single Parents (Benefits)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the relative level of *(a)* in-work and *(b)* out-of-work benefits paid to single parents; and if he will make a statement. [57118]

Margaret Hodge: The exact level of in and out of work support that a lone parent will receive is dependent on their circumstances and income, including child support and housing tenure. These vary considerably among lone parents.

Since 1997 the Government have made a number of improvements to the tax and benefit system to ensure that work pays. We have developed an effective strategy for helping more lone parents make the transition from benefits and into work which combines child care assistance, financial support for those entering work and provision of work focused advice and support.

In 1998 we introduced the national minimum wage, which currently stands at £5.05 per hour for those aged 22 and over. The child and working tax credits introduced in April 2003 will help tackle child poverty and make work pay for all families, including lone parents.

A lone parent with two children, moving into work on the national minimum wage, with child care costs of £80 per week, will be financially better off by around £56 per week. This could be increased by any child support maintenance received, as this is disregarded in full for tax credit purposes.

Generally, a lone parent who is not in work can access all relevant benefits— though what they qualify for will depend on individual circumstances. The large majority of lone parents on benefit claim income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit. They will also receive child benefit. Their individual circumstances may also allow them to claim certain premiums within their income support entitlement, such as the disabled child or carer premiums. Being in receipt of income support also entitles them to free school meals for their children and free prescriptions and eye tests.

Voluntary Organisations

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions with which voluntary organisations the Department has a formal national compact agreement. [50265]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the Member for Wythenshawe and Sale, East (Paul Goggins) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 107W.

HEALTH

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report,* columns 449–50W, how many people attended A&E walk-in centres in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 in (i) England and (ii) the Countess of Chester hospital. [57515]

Mr. Byrne: "A&E Walk in Centres" describes data on all national health service walk in centres collected through Quarterly Monitoring of Key Standards and Targets: Accident and Emergency, England (QMAE). 1,381,841 and 2,031,430 attendances at NHS walk in centres were reported in England through the QMAE data set in 2003–04 and 2004–05 respectively. Attendances are defined as visits to a walk in centre that result in the attender being seen by a clinician. There is not and never has been an NHS walk in centre at the Countess of Chester hospital so it is not possible to supply the data requested in respect of this service.

Advertising and Marketing Campaigns

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by her Department in 2005–06 on advising the NHS on advertising and marketing by individual hospitals. [56782]

Mr. Byrne: To date, there has been no specific expenditure on advising the national health service on advertising and marketing by individual hospitals. The Department's advice to the NHS on this issue is contained within paragraphs 4.19–4.21 of "The NHS in England: The operating framework for 2006–07", which was published on 26 January 2006.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been spent by the NHS in 2005–06 on advice and preparation for advertising and marketing campaigns for individual hospitals; [56783]

(2) what estimate she has made of the amount to be spent on advertising and marketing by individual hospitals in 2006–07. [56784]

Mr. Byrne: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report,* columns 454–55W, on departmental advertising campaigns, if she will list the amounts spent on the campaigns listed in each of the past five years. [50971]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the amount of expenditure on major information campaigns and advertising commissioned by the Department's communications directorate in the past five years.

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antibiotics	—	0.44	0.44	0.42	—
CALM	—	0.05	0.15	—	—
Drugs	0.52	—	1.52	1.6	0.99
Flu	2.02	1.45	2.0	1.6	1.5
Hepatitis C	—	—	—	—	—
Immunisation	—	0.67	1.0	2.0	0.05

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Mind Out	—	0.13	0.16	—	—
National health service including nurse recruitment	4.9	5.00	4.23	4.9	5.84
NHS Direct	0.21	1.08	0.58	0.75	—
Organ donation	0.43	0.18	0.22	—	—
Prescription fraud	1.35	—	0.30	—	—
Sexwise/teenage pregnancy	—	2.00	1.6	2.08	—
Sexual Health	—	0.3	1.5	1.5	1.26
Social care recruitment	—	0.83	1.24	4.62	2.14
Smoking	8.97	7.79	7.87	17.76	24.00
Tuberculosis awareness	—	0.30	0.09	—	—
Walk-in centres	0.37	0.02	—	—	0.20
Winter (Get the right treatment, Ask about medicines day)	2.03	0.16	0.25	1.75	0.59
Promoting new NHS services	—	—	—	—	0.85
E111	—	—	—	—	0.32
Total	20.80	20.40	23.13	38.98	37.8

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS has spent on radio advertising in each of the past five years for which figures are available. [59427]

Mr. Byrne: We are unable to give figures for how much the national health service has spent on radio advertising in each of the past five years, as this information is not held centrally.

The table shows how much the Department has spent on Departmental radio campaigns for the five years 2000–01 to 2004–05.

	Amount spent on advertising (£)
2000–01	3,074,277
2001–02	2,271,833
2002–03	2,032,252
2003–04	2,124,034
2004–05	3,744,051

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 976W, on hospitals, when she expects to issue guidelines for advertising by hospitals. [54242]

Mr. Byrne: All advertising should present accurate and fair information about services. No activity should be undertaken which undermines the reputation of the national health service. These initial principles to safeguard patients and the public are already set out in "The NHS in England: the operating framework for 2006–07".

The Department are now working with key stakeholders such as the NHS Confederation, the Foundation Trust Network, NHS Partners and the Healthcare Commission to develop further guidance, which will be published later in the year.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the performance of Tees, East and North Yorkshire ambulance service in meeting national standards for answering emergency calls in rural areas in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [57866]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the response times by category of call for emergency incidents dealt with by the Tees, East and North Yorkshire ambulance service national health service trust (TENYAS) as a percentage for the past five years. In 2004–05, TENYAS exceeded the national performance requirements for responding to category A emergency incidents.

Percentage

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Category A					
Within 8 minutes[1]	52.8	71.9	73.4	73.7	77.1
Within 19 minutes[2]	96.4	97.8	97.6	97.9	98.5
Category B/C					
Within 19 minutes[3]	95.7	96.5	95.4	95.7	94.8a
	—	—	—	—	94.8b

[1] Presenting conditions which may be immediately life threatening (category A) should be responded to within eight minutes irrespective of location in 75 per cent. of cases.

[2] A fully equipped ambulance should attend incidents classified as category A within 14/19 minutes of the initial call, 95 per cent. of the time, unless the control room decides that an ambulance is not required.

[3] Presenting conditions which may be serious (category B) should be responded to within 14 minutes (urban) or 19 minutes (rural) in 95 per cent. of cases.

[4] Prior to 1 October 2004, it was also required that non-urgent (category C) calls received a response within 14 minutes (urban) or 19 minutes (rural) in 95 per cent. of cases. Since 1 October 2004, category C calls have been managed locally.

Notes:

(a) Category B/C calls in the period April 2004 to September 2004[4].

(b) Category B calls in the period October 2004 to March 2005.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre return KA34.

Audiology

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to reduce audiology waiting lists. [46365]

Mr. Byrne: The modernising hearing aids programme introduced several initiatives to increase the capacity to deliver national health service audiology services. These included the national framework contract public private partnership to bring in additional independent sector capacity; the development of a new degree to help to address the shortage of audiologists and; the introduction of Hearing Direct to provide follow-up care and advice for some hearing aid users.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1064W, to the hon. Member for Worthing, West (Peter Bottomley) on hearing services, how regularly she intends to publish the monthly commissioner-based data for waiting times and activity for pure tone audiometry; and if she will make a statement. [52965]

Mr. Byrne: Monthly commissioner-based data will be published. As with many new data collections, it may take a number of months of collection before the data are of sufficient quality to be publishable.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information is collected from NHS trusts on waiting times for pure tone audiometry. [54632]

Mr. Byrne: Since January 2006, the Department collects information monthly on the number of patients waiting for pure tone audiometry, by time band; and on the amount of activity carried out during the month. The Department plans to commence routine publication of this data from the spring to inform 18-week preparations.

Blind/Partially Sighted People

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what factors she took into account when deciding not to establish minimum entitlements to care for blind and partially sighted people; and if she will make a statement; [58680]

(2) what steps she is taking to increase the number of *(a)* rehabilitation workers for blind and partially sighted people and *(b)* training providers for such rehabilitation workers; [58681]

(3) how much local authorities in England spent on services for blind and partially sighted people in each of the last five years. [58696]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* In making decisions about provision of social care, blind and partially sighted people are treated the same as any other potential user of services. Care for all individuals is determined, based on assessment of need, local eligibility criteria and the local provision of services.

Rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people are provided by local health and social care bodies. The Department has given the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, in collaboration with other employers, through Skills for Care, £30,000 to redesign hybrid rehabilitation functions in work with visually impaired people. It is, however, the responsibility of local authorities and health trusts to ensure they have an adequate number of trained people to deliver rehabilitation services to the blind and partially sighted people in their area.

The information on how much local authorities in England spent on services for blind and partially sighted people in each of the last five years, is not held centrally.

Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialist cancer nurses are working in the NHS. [58288]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* This information is not collected centrally.

Cancer nurses were not separately identified from the rest of the nursing workforce.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will commission a public awareness campaign on *(a)* cancer risk factors and lifestyle choices and *(b)* the signs and symptoms of cancer. [58957]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* We are not planning to commission a national campaign, as this is not the most effective method to encourage people to either change their lifestyle choices, or seek medical help if they have symptoms of cancer. Local campaigns targeted at people at greatest risk of developing cancer have been shown to be more effective, and we are working with the national health service, charitable organisations and experts in social marketing approaches to develop local pilots.

Care Closer to Home

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether a representative from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain was invited to sit on the care closer to home demonstration group. [55021]

Mr. Byrne: A representative from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain was not invited to sit on the care closer to home demonstration group as membership of this group was limited in number to maintain focus.

However, there will be other opportunities, for groups not represented on the demonstration group to participate in the care closer to home work.

Care Treatment Centres

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the difference between a minor injuries unit and an urgent care centre. [57510]

Mr. Byrne: Minor injuries units (MIUs) provide care for non-life threatening injuries. Urgent care centres (UCCs) aim to provide integrated care for non-life threatening injury and illness. Both MIUs and UCCs are usually led by experienced nurses or general practitioners. Services may be sited in the community or co-located with a major accident and emergency.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many attendances there were at *(a)* minor injuries units and *(b)* NHS walk in centres in the quarter ending December 2005. [57654]

Mr. Byrne: In the quarter ending December 2005, national health service trusts and primary care trusts in England reported 484,321 attendances at minor injury units and 614,993 attendances at NHS walk-in centres.

Source:
QMAE

Carers

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with the Welsh

Assembly Government on sharing good practice in the implementation of the Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004. [59392]

Mr. Byrne: None. However, the Department is committed to ensuring that good practice is captured and that local authorities in England as well as their counterparts in the devolved administrations are able to learn from it. This is why we commissioned the social care institute for excellence (SCIE) to produce a practice guide to the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

SCIE aims to improve the experience of people who use social care by developing and promoting knowledge about good practice. The guide translates what is known from research and policy into recommendations for practice and is available on their website at: www.scie.org.uk/publications/ipracticeguides/carersguidance/index.asp.

Cerebral Palsy

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost has been to the national health service of treatment for cerebral palsy in each of the last 20 years. [58364]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the cost to the national health service of specific conditions, including cerebral palsy, is not collected.

Choose and Book

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of patients using the Choose and Book System have chosen not to use their local provider; [54873]

(2) how many patients have been booked into out-patient appointments via the Choose and Book system since April 2005. [54876]

Mr. Byrne: Information on patients' choice of provider is not collected centrally.

Over 142,000 new bookings have been made via the Choose and Book service. The majority of these are for out-patient appointments.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria were used to assess the performance of the Citizens Advice Bureau in its delivery of the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service; and whether this criteria will be applied to other contractors. [56965]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the current contract, due to expire on 31 March 2006, performance is assessed in the same way across all service providers.

The Department has conducted a rigorous procurement exercise for delivery of the new contracts which will start on 1 April 2006. Organisations were required to submit bids against a detailed specification setting out our requirements, including performance assessment criteria that differed from the original contract. The successful organisations submitted bids which more closely matched the Department's requirements and offered better value for money than the bid submitted by the Citizens Advice Bureau. All successful contractors have been delivering independent complaints advocacy service under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice she received in connection with the decision to *(a)* end the Citizens Advice Bureau's contract in the North West to provide the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service and *(b)* withdraw support from this model of service delivery. [56966]

Mr. Byrne: The Department conducted a rigorous procurement exercise in which organisations were required to submit bids against a detailed specification setting out our requirements that differed from the original contract. The new independent complaints advocacy service (ICAS) specification, which was produced after extensive stakeholder consultation and which builds on all that has been learned over the life of the existing contracts, will ensure the provision of a high quality, client centred, flexible service which operates to national standards. The successful organisations submitted bids which more closely matched the Department's requirements and offered better value for money than the bid submitted by the Citizens Advice Bureau. All successful contractors have been delivering independent complaints advocacy service under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the decision was taken to end the contract to Citizens Advice Bureau in the North West for the provision of the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service. [56967]

Mr. Byrne: After an extensive procurement exercise which included a series of meetings with the citizens advice central management team the decision was made on 16 December 2005 not to offer the independent complaints advocacy service contract for the North West to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Common Assessment Framework

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to introduce a common assessment framework as described at paragraph 5.26 of the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'; and what the differences are between the common assessment framework and the single assessment process. [57728]

Mr. Byrne: Work to develop a common assessment framework is at an early stage. We envisage building on, rather than replacing, the existing single assessment process for older people in order to make it applicable to other client groups.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely change in the workload of Kingston Hospital if Surbiton Community Hospital is closed. [58918]

Jane Kennedy: The South West London Strategic Health Authority have advised that, inpatient beds, which were at Surbiton Hospital, were successfully transferred at the end of November 2005 and are currently provided on the Tolworth Hospital site (intermediate care) and in a local nursing home (continuing care). These arrangements would remain in place if Surbiton Hospital were to be closed. Kingston Primary Care Trust (PCT) is currently examining the potential for continuing the provision of outpatient services at Surbiton Hospital, prior to a decision being made at the PCT board meeting on 7 April. This includes an assessment of the potential impact upon Kingston Hospital.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the number of beds available in community hospitals in *(a)* Kingston and Surbiton, *(b)* South West London and *(c)* London. [58924]

Jane Kennedy: The Department collects data on the number of available and occupied hospital beds from trusts and primary care trusts (PCTs). Trusts and PCTs are not required to submit their data on an individual hospital basis. Aggregated data by trust or PCT are available on the Department's website for hospital activity at:

www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/beds_open_overnight.htm

Continuing Care (Funding)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what procedures she has put in place to ensure that *(a)* community care nurses, *(b)* social workers and *(c)* review panels observe her directive of 3 March requiring (i) them to be familiar with and (ii) act in accordance with the implications of judgments in the Coughlan and Grogan cases relating to the funding of continuing NHS care; [59714]

(2) what steps she is taking to ensure that all refusals of fully-funded NHS continuing care prior to 3 March are re-considered in light of her directive of that date; [59715]

(3) what estimate she has made of the cost to the NHS of implementing her directive of 3 March on NHS continuing care with retrospective effect. [59717]

Mr. Byrne: Department guidance to strategic health authorities following the "Grogan" judgment makes it clear that it is their responsibility to ensure that their continuing care eligibility criteria and assessment processes are operating in line with legal rulings. Strategic health authorities are required to disseminate guidance internally, and satisfy themselves that correct procedures are being followed.

If a strategic health authority revises its eligibility criteria or processes following legal advice in light of the "Grogan" judgment, the guidance requires strategic health authorities to determine, based on local circumstances, which individuals or groups of individuals may be at highest risk of having been wrongly assessed. It is the responsibility of the health authority to assess potential for any changes to impact on individuals and act accordingly. The Department cannot pre-judge the outcome of strategic health authorities taking legal advice regarding the lawfulness of their continuing care processes.

Deaf-blind People

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to review the operation of the statutory guidance for the social care of deafblind children and adults in England and Wales; and if she will make a statement. [57279]

Mr. Byrne: We have no plans to review the operation of the statutory guidance for the social care of deafblind children and adults in England and Wales. It is the responsibility of councils to identify the number of deafblind people in their area and provide services to meet their assessed needs.

Dentistry

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are *(a)* registered and *(b)* not registered with an NHS dentist in the Easington primary care trust area. [46008]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. Information on the number of people not registered with a national health service dentist is not collected centrally. However the number of general dental service and personal dental service patients seen as at 30 November 2005 was 42,458. An estimate of the percentage of patients registered with an NHS dentist in the Easington primary care trust area is shown in the table.

The proportion of people registered within the Easington primary care trust as at November 2005 (last available data) was 46 per cent. (estimated).

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS)

Easington PCT	*Estimate of the percentage patients registered*[1]
Adults	44
Children	50
All	46

[1] Using population estimates at 2004.

Notes:

1. The percentages of the population registered with a dentist, or registration rate, have been estimated by including patient registrations in the area of the dentist, that is according to the postcode of the dental surgery and not the patient's address. So the registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live.
2. Estimates have been calculated using population estimates for the nearest year for which data are available. 2005 percentages have been calculated using 2004 mid-year population estimates.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists from each EU accession country are practising in England; and what estimate she has made of how many have returned to their country of origin in the last 12 months. [59375]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the numbers of general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) dentists and numbers of complete leavers[1] by country of qualification, of the 10 countries that joined the European Union on 1 May 2004, in England as at 30 September 2005.

Country	*GDS and PDS dentists*	*Complete leaver*[1]
Czech Republic	7	0
Cyprus	0	0
Estonia	0	0
Hungary	0	0
Latvia	6	0
Lithuania	0	0
Malta	6	1
Poland	341	0
Slovakia	0	0
Slovenia	0	0

[1] Complete leaver means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September 2004 but no GDS or PDS contract in September 2005.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Data on the destination of dentists leaving the GDS or PDS are not held centrally.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time NHS dentists there were in (i) Essex and (ii) England in each of the last five years; and how many dentists there were in (A) Essex and (B) England per thousand head of population in each of the last five years. [59578]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The numbers broken down by full-time and part-time are not available.

The total numbers of national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract, and dentists per 1,000 population, in England and in Essex Strategic Health Authority (SHA) as at 30 September each year are shown in the table. Information concerning the amount of time dedicated to NHS work by individual GDS or PDS dentists is not centrally available.

England

	Number of GDS and PDS dentists	*Dentists per 1,000 population*
2001	18,722	0.38
2002	18,946	0.38
2003	19,260	0.39
2004	19,722	0.39
2005	20,890	0.42

Essex SHA

	Number of GDS and PDS dentists	*Dentists per 1,000 population*
2001	590	0.37
2002	566	0.35
2003	574	0.35
2004	595	0.36
2005	662	0.40

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Departmental Vehicles

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cars are *(a)* owned and *(b)* leased by her Department; what models the cars are; what type of petrol each model requires; and what the fuel efficiency is of each model. [41359]

Mr. Byrne: The Department currently owns three vehicles, and leases two vehicles which is shown in the table.

Make	*Model*	*Fuel type and MPG*	*Owned/ leased*
Ford	Mondeo Duratorq GHIA	Diesel	Owned
Nissan	Almera SVE	Diesel	Owned
Peugeot	307 Rapier HDI	Diesel	Owned
Volkswagen	Golf MK5 D GT TDI EU IV	Diesel	Leased
Citroen	Xsara Picasso SX 1.61	Diesel	Leased

Data on fuel efficiency is provided by the Vehicle Certification Agency and is published on their website at www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk

Diabetes

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been diagnosed with diabetes in each constituency in Lancashire in each of the last five years. [57636]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 March 2006.]:* The information is not available in the format requested. However, the following table shows all diagnoses count of patients for diabetes from 2001–01 to 2004–05.

All diagnoses count of patients for diabetes (ICD-10 codes E10–E14) NHS Hospitals England, 2000–01 to 2004–05

	Primary care trust	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
5CC	Blackburn and Darwen PCT	909	1,036	1,042	1,122	1,301
5D4	Carlisle District PCT	476	550	616	779	889
5D5	Eden Valley PCT	265	316	363	434	506
5D6	West Cumbria PCT	572	747	1,010	1,398	1,434
5DD	Morecombe Bay PCT	1,575	1,808	2,092	2,354	2,740
5F2	Chorely and South Ribble PCT	1,494	1,697	1,707	1,724	1,684
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	803	817	844	887	956
5G7	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	599	657	760	782	892
5G8	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	1,977	2,193	2,357	2,439	2,483
5HD	Preston PCT	1,178	1,285	1,351	1,307	1,166
5HE	Fylde PCT	340	409	522	527	558
5HF	Wyre PCT	611	739	810	955	1,035
5HP	Blackpool PCT	844	984	1,171	1,277	1,245

Notes:

Patient counts:

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier Hospital Episode Statistics identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

All diagnoses count of patients:

These figures represent a count of all patients where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) record.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis):

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Secondary diagnoses:

As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

Primary care trust (PCI) and strategic health authority (SHA) data quality PCT and SHA data was added to historic data-years in the HES database using 2002–03 boundaries, as a one- off exercise in 2004. The quality of the data on PCT of treatment and SHA of treatment is poor in 1996–97, 1997–98 and 1998–99, with over a third of all finished episodes having missing values in these years. Data quality of PCT of general practitioner (GP) practice and SHA of GP practice in 1997–98 and 1998–99 is also poor, with a high proportion missing values where practices changed or ceased to exist. There is less change in completeness of the residence-based fields over time, where the majority of unknown values are due to missing postcodes on birth episodes. Users of time series analysis including these years need to be aware of these issues in their interpretation of the data.

Ungrossed data:

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Domiciliary Oxygen

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the annual cost was of providing a domiciliary oxygen service through the community pharmacy network in each of the past four years. [51681]

Jane Kennedy: Figures for 2005–06 are not yet available. For the previous three years, the total annual costs reimbursed to pharmacy contractors and some dispensing doctors for the domiciliary cylinder oxygen service were:

	£
2002–03	28,300,590
2003–04	31,081,087
2004–05	32,809,514

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of requests for home oxygen supplies were emergency requests in *(a)* England and *(b)* the North West in the last period for which figures are available. [57520]

Jane Kennedy: Before 1 February 2006, there was no requirement to supply oxygen on an emergency basis. This is a specific requirement in the new service contract introduced on that date. Information on the number of such requests is not held centrally. It is included in data provided to primary care trusts as part of financial and performance management of the contract.

Hospital Transport

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision is made for transport from home to hospital of *(a)* severely disabled people and *(b)* severely disabled people where the carer is unable to drive. [57521]

Mr. Byrne: The publication "Ambulance and other patient transport services: Operation, use and performance standards" provides guidance on the eligibility criteria for patient transport services (PTS) and is available in the Library. This document states that medical need for non-emergency patient transport must be determined by a doctor, dentist or midwife and will depend upon the medical condition of the individual patient, the availability of private or public transport and distance to be travelled. The principle which should apply is that each patient should be able to reach hospital in a reasonable time and in reasonable comfort, without detriment to their medical condition.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for ensuring that there is provision of ambulance services (which could include patient transport services) to such extent as they consider necessary to meet all reasonable requirements. Therefore, it is for the local national health service to decide who provides patient transport services for eligible patients in their area. PCTs should apply the principles outlined in the aforementioned publication to consider each case on its merits or to develop local criteria for patient transport services use. The White Paper "Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services" signals our intent to broaden eligibility to patients referred for treatment in out of hospital settings, and during 2006–07 we will update guidance on eligibility for PTS to reflect the changes outlined in the White Paper.

Patients that do not have a medical need for ambulance transport and who are on low incomes, or in receipt of benefits or tax credits, may be eligible for reimbursement of their travel expenses under the hospital travel costs scheme.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial penalties can be applied to home oxygen providers who do not meet the terms of their contracts. [57527]

Jane Kennedy: The Department can terminate the contract of any supplier who breaches material terms of their contract, and require the outgoing supplier to meet the costs incurred where another supplier is brought in to provide the service. Where the service delivery fails to meet the standards set out in the contract, the supplier may be required to re-perform those services.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the regional suppliers for the home oxygen service. [57572]

Jane Kennedy: Linde Gas UK is the supplier for the North East oxygen service region. Air Products is the supplier for the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, North London and South West oxygen service regions. Allied Respiratory is the supplier for regions covering South London, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. BOC Medical is the supplier in the Eastern service region. This information is published in part X of the drug tariff, which is also available on the prescription pricing authority's website (www.ppa.org.uk) and the home oxygen section of the national health service primary care contracting website (www.primarycarecontracting.nhs.uk).

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the new arrangements for the domiciliary supply of oxygen products to patients. [58088]

Jane Kennedy: There has been disruption to the planned six-month programme, which began on 1 February 2006, to support the transfer of patients receiving home oxygen supplies to new suppliers. We have already taken action to get that planned programme back on track and we are continuing to work with the national health service and suppliers to monitor progress. When fully introduced, the new arrangements will provide a modern service to patients with improved access to a wider range of oxygen equipment that can do much to improve their quality of life.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from the medical profession since the introduction of new arrangements for the domiciliary supply of oxygen products to patients. [58089]

Jane Kennedy: Representatives of the medical profession were included in consultation on the development of the new service. Since introduction of the new arrangements on 1 February 2006, we have continued discussions with them on plans to transfer patients to the new suppliers by August 2006.

Elderly Care Provision

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the level of mental stimulation provided for elderly people who are cared for *(a)* by relatives and *(b)* in residential accommodation; and if she will make a statement; [48353]

(2) if she will take steps to ensure that elderly people *(a)* in their own homes and *(b)* in residential accommodation have free access to companionship and social interaction. [48354]

Mr. Byrne: The rights of older people in residential accommodation to enjoy mental stimulus, companionship and social interaction are covered in the existing "Care Homes for Older People—National Minimum Standards", a copy of which is available in the Library. The Commission for Social Care Inspection inspects homes against the national minimum standards (NMS), when assessing compliance with the Care Homes Regulations 2001. The NMS address the topic from various perspectives, including the rights of service users to engage in social and community activities and interests, meeting and maintaining contact with friends and family, religious or cultural requirements, the suitability of residential home premises and the social value of meals and mealtimes.

Since October 2004, the Government have been engaged in a review of the NMS and the associated legislative framework for adult social care. The review is a key element in the modernisation of social care regulation and will update the statutory framework for which the Government are responsible.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the cost of providing free long-term care for elderly people. [57291]

Mr. Byrne: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2701W.

Expert Patient Programme

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS has paid *(a)* Kate Lorig and *(b)* Stanford university for the use of the Expert Patient Programme for the Chronically Ill. [58598]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* In 2002, the Department paid a single payment of approximately £72,000 to Stanford university for an unlimited use licence for the national health service and local authorities to practice the chronic disease self management course (CDSMC). Kate Lorig is head of the Patient Education Research Centre at Stanford university which led the development of the CDSMC and has received no separate payment. This licence to date has enabled 30,000 people with long-term health conditions in England to benefit from the chronic disease self-management course.

Failing Hospitals

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under the health reform in England proposals, whether the *(a)* geographical distance and *(b)* quality of transport links to alternative effective hospitals will be taken into account in the decision over whether a failing hospital is to be required to close. [49626]

Jane Kennedy: Making decisions on local health care provision, including the closure of hospitals, is a matter for primary care trusts and strategic health authorities in consultation with the local population and its representatives. To support the consultation and decision making process the Department has issued two guidance documents:

"Strengthening Accountability: Involving Patients and the Public—Policy Guidance Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001" (February 2003).

"Overview and Scrutiny of Health—Guidance" (July 2003).

The recently published document, "Health Reform in England: Update and Next Steps" does not make specific mention of the issues that national health service organisations should take into account when deciding whether a failing hospital is to be required to close.

Food Allergies

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been admitted to hospital due to allergic reactions to *(a)* nuts and *(b)* milk in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [58541]

Mr. Byrne: While hospital episode statistics contains details of patients admitted to, and treated in, hospital for food allergies, it is not possible to distinguish from the data how many of these admissions were as a result of an allergic reaction to nuts or milk.

Foundation Trusts

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether foundation hospital trusts have a veto over who may be *(a)* nominated and *(b)* proposed by a local authority for appointment to such trusts. [54896]

Mr. Byrne: Schedule 1, paragraph 9(4) of the Health and Social Care Act 2003 allows for a qualifying local authority to appoint a governor to an national health service foundation trust. The NHS foundation trust has no veto on who may be nominated nor appointed, provided the person concerned is not excluded by conditions set out in statute or the NHS foundation trust's constitution.

General Practitioners

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average take-home pay was for general practitioners in *(a)* England and *(b)* West Lancashire in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [58472]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the average take-home pay for general practitioners in England and West Lancashire is not collected centrally. However, figures based on information for Great Britain are available, which is shown in the table.

	Intended average net remuneration/income (£)
1994–95	41,890
1995–96	43,165
1996–97	44,483
1997–98	46,031
1998–99	48,037
1999–2000	52,606
2000–01	54,219
2001–02	56,510
2002–03	61,618
2003–04[1]	67,040

[1] Forecast figures

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to paragraph 3.22 of "Our health, Our care, Our say", how many and what percentage of general practitioner practice lists are open but full; and if she will make a statement. [53608]

Mr. Byrne: The new general medical services contract provides for practice patient lists to be either open or closed to new registrations. The Department does not therefore hold information of the number of practices who are claiming to have lists which are open but full. However, we do recognise that some practices may face capacity pressures and don't accept new registrations although they are not formally closed. The recent White Paper commits us to improving the closed list arrangements so that there is clarity for patients on whether a practice is open for new registrations. We intend to work with the NHS Employers and the British Medical Association to deliver that commitment.

Greater Manchester PCTs

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment her Department has made of the Greater Manchester primary care trusts' decision to end the 'in perpetuity' dowry agreements with local authorities and the political impact of the decision on social services budgets in the county; [57816]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with primary care trusts in Greater Manchester on their decision to end the 'in perpetuity' dowry agreements with local authorities. [57831]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has not had discussions with any primary care trust (PCT) in the Greater Manchester strategic health authority area regarding dowry agreements with local authorities and has made no assessment of any PCT decision in respect of this matter. It is for local authorities and national health service providers to determine the best way to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities in their population.

The Department has supported more sustainable partnership funding arrangements through section 31 of the Health Act (1999) flexibilities, which created the provision for a strategic transfer of funding for the population as a whole. The NHS block transfers its funding in return for the local authority taking a lead commissioning role that includes covering people who formerly lived in a long stay hospital.

PCTs should continue to transfer to local authorities funding associated with people who used to live in long stay hospitals.

Health Professionals (Training Costs)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the cost to the public purse of training *(a)* doctors and *(b)* dentists in the last year for which figures are available. [57411]

Mr. Byrne: In 2005–06, £725 million was provided to meet the clinical cost of training doctors. We estimate that, in 2005–06 that the clinical cost of training some 3,500 dental undergraduates in dental schools in England was £62 million net of tuition fees. The Higher Education Funding Council for England meets academic costs for both, but this information is not collected centrally.

"Health Reform in England; Update and Next Steps"

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in respect of the proposed NHS reforms outlined in 'Health Reform in England; update and next steps', whether the *(a)* general practitioner *(b)* primary care trust and *(c)* hospital will decide whether or not to admit a patient to hospital for treatment. [47468]

Mr. Byrne: Under the framework of reforms outlined in "Health reform in England", general practitioners (GPs) will remain responsible for deciding whether to refer a patient to hospital. Hospital doctors will continue to be responsible for taking clinical decisions to admit for treatment and will also continue to decide whether to admit in cases of emergencies.

GPs, primary care trusts and national health service trusts will work together to ensure patients have access to high quality services in the most appropriate and convenient setting.

Health Service Management

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* chairmen, *(b)* chief executive officers, *(c)* financial directors and *(d)* medical and health directors have (i) been sacked and (ii) resigned before the end of their contractual term in (A) 2005–06 and (B) each of the three preceding financial years; which trust or health authority was involved in each case; and what level of compensation was paid in each case where this was applicable. [57511]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available centrally.

Secretary of State has delegated her appointments functions relating to Chairmen of national health service organisations to the NHS Appointments Commission.

I have asked the NHS Appointments Commission to write to the hon. Member directly regarding information about Chairmen.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* NHS trusts and *(b)* health authorities (i) are operating and (ii) have operated in the last three financial years with acting or seconded (A) directors and (B) senior executives. [57513]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally.

Health Services

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people diagnosed with diabetes there were in Hyndburn in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [57563]

Mr. Byrne: The information relating to the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Primary Care Trust (PCT) data is shown in the table.

All diagnoses count of patients for diabetes: Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT, national health service hospitals England—1997–98 and 2004–05

	Patient counts
1997–98	609
2004–05	892

Notes:

1. *Patient counts*

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier Hospital Episode Statistic identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

2. *All diagnoses count of patients*

These figures represent a count of all patients where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a Hospital Episode Statistic (HES) record.

3. *Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)*

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

4. *Secondary diagnoses*

As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

5. *Primary care trust (PCT) and strategic health authority (SHA) data quality*

PCT and SHA data was added to historic data-years in the HES database using 2002–03 boundaries, as a one-off exercise in 2004. The quality of the data on PCT of treatment and SHA of treatment is poor in 1996–97, 1997–98 and 1998–99, with over a third of all finished episodes having missing values in these years. Data quality of PCT of general practitioner (GP) practice and SHA of GP practice in 1997–98 and 1998–99 is also poor, with a high proportion missing values where practices changed or ceased to exist. There is less change in completeness of the residence-based fields over time, where the majority of unknown values are due to missing postcodes on birth episodes. Users of time series analysis including these years need to be aware of these issues in their interpretation of the data.

6. *Ungrossed data*

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were treated for sexually transmitted infections in Hyndburn in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [57564]

Mr. Byrne: The information relating to the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley primary care trust data is shown in the following table.

Count of patients—primary diagnosis STDs, HIV/AIDS—Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT. National health service hospitals England, 1997–98 and 2004–05

	Patient counts
1997–98	14
2004–05	11

Notes:

1. Patient counts:

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier hospital episode statistic identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

2. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis):
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

3. Primary care trust (PCT and strategic health authority (SHA) data quality:
PCT and SHA data was added to historic data-years in the HES database using 2002–03 boundaries, as a one-off exercise in 2004. The quality of the data on PCT of treatment and SHA of treatment is poor in 1996–97, 1997–98 and 1998–99, with over a third of all finished episodes having missing values in these years. Data quality of PCT of general practitioner (GP) practice and SHA of GP practice in 1997–98 and 1998–99 is also poor, with a high proportion missing values where practices changed or ceased to exist. There is less change in completeness of the residence-based fields over time, where the majority of unknown values are due to missing postcodes on birth episodes. Users of time series analysis including these years need to be aware of these issues in their interpretation of the data.

4. Ungrossed data:
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is the data is ungrossed.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding the Department has provided to *(a)* Wakefield West Primary Care Trust and *(b)* the NHS for dental services in each year from 1997 to 2005. [53409]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The main element of national health service dental services are the primary dental care services provided by dentists working within the general dental services (GDS), or personal dental services (PDS) pilots. Gross and net expenditure on the GDS is shown in table 1. The table also includes gross expenditure on PDS pilots, but it is not possible to provide similar data for net PDS expenditure as patient charge income is not separately identified in NHS accounts. Based on estimates from Dental Practice Board (DPB) payments data, we estimate that PDS expenditure in 2004–05 net of patient charge income was around £240 million.

Table 1: Expenditure on GDS and PDS, England

£ million

	Gross GDS[1]	*Net GDS*[2]	*Gross PDS*[3]
1997–98	1,348	959	0
1998–99	1,438	1,018	4
1999–2000	1,477	1,046	13
2000–01	1,561	1,109	22
2001–02	1,638	1,166	36
2002–03	1,709	1,222	41
2003–04	1,767	1,283	48
2004–05	1,671	1,246	[4]280

[1] Expenditure data for 1997–98 to 1999–2000 are based on cash data in Appropriation Accounts. Data from 2000–01 onwards are based on the relevant resource accounts data from health authorities and primary care trusts (PCTs). This is to reflect the change in Department's accountancy practices.
[2] Net expenditure represents the cost of the service after taking account of dental charge income collected from patients.
[3] NHS accounts data up to 2004–05 do not separately identify all elements of PDS gross expenditure. See note 4 for 2004–05 data.
[4] An estimate of gross PDS expenditure based on payments data obtained from the DPB.

The level of expenditure on hospital and community dental services is decided at local level by PCTs.

GDS is currently a non-discretionary service funded from a national budget where expenditure is mainly determined by the volume of NHS work that dentists choose to undertake. Local budget allocations are not assigned to individual PCTs. Data on the level of expenditure within the area of the Wakefield West PCT, drawn from payments data obtained from the DPB, are shown in table 2. Payment data are only attributable to individual PCT areas from 2000–01 onwards.

Table 2: GDS and PDS dental payments within Wakefield West PCT

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Gross GDS and PDS payments[1,2,3]	4.642	5.211	5.125	5.456	6.047
Net GDS and PDS payments[4]	3.08	3.626	3.533	3.861	4.657

[1] Gross GDS payments include adult fees (including item of service and continuing care payments), child fees (including item of service and capitation payments), commitment payments and point of treatment check payment training (in 2001 only), seniority payments, maternity/paternity/adoptive leave payments, long-term sick leave payments, continuing professional development allowances including travel hours, reimbursement of business rates, vocational training grants, vocational trainee salaries and NI contribution costs, clinical audit convenors, clinical audit payments, clinical audit secretarial support and travel expenses. Employer's superannuation costs are excluded.
[2] PDS payment data are included for 2004–05 only and relate to baseline payments or the agreed regular monthly payments made to PDS practices. Reliable PDS data at practice level are not available prior to 2004–05. The data cannot identify the cost of any PDS services that may be provided in Wakefield West that are directly managed by local NHS trusts, such as certain dental access centres.
[3] Payments are assigned to PCT area on the basis of practice postcode data.
[4] Net payments represent the balance of payments due after taking account of NHS dental charge income collected from patients by dental practices.

Health Trainers

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many health trainers are employed in the NHS; what minimum qualifications are required for the post; and at what rate of salary they are employed; [51709]

(2) how many health trainers she estimates will be employed in the NHS when the proposals in her recent White Paper on Community Services (Cm 6737) are fully implemented; and what the total annual cost to public funds will be of employing them. [51710]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* As was announced to Parliament on 20 July 2005

> "Primary care trusts and their partners, especially the spearhead primary care trusts, are planning to recruit, train, and fund health trainers from April 2006 when this funding comes on stream."

The national health service health trainer programme is in the early adopter phase, comprising some 150 primary care trusts (PCTs) including all 88 spearhead PCTs.

There are currently 214 NHS health trainers recruited to the programme, of which 192 are now under, or have completed, training.

Choosing health money has been allocated to provide 1,200 NHS health trainers by the end of financial year 2006–07.

The employment requirements are that health trainers satisfy the mandatory core competences supplied by the Department. The core competences are being finalised during the early adopter phase which finishes 31 March 2006.

Currently the national profile for a health trainer under agenda for change is being agreed, once it is finalised there will be a clear rate of salary for health trainers.

Salary is still under negotiation through the agenda for change process.

A breakdown of where the money has been spent and cost centres is shown in the table.

NHS health trainers provision and expenditure

£ million

		Provision	
	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Securing health care for those who need it	5.00	—	—
PCT allocations	—	36.00	77.00
Securing social care and child protection for those who need it and, at national level, protecting, promoting and improving the nation's health	2.20	2.0	2.0

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons her Department needs to manage the procurement of primary care medical services on behalf of primary care trusts as described in paragraph 3.46 of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say. [49558]

Mr. Byrne: The Department will be managing the fairness in primary care procurement to enable primary care trusts in areas with longstanding problems in health care provision to have access to the Departments expertise and experience in national procurements.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which six primary care trusts her Department is assisting in the procurement of primary care medical services as described in paragraph 3.37, of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, with which suppliers the primary care trusts are in negotiation to provide primary care medical services; what the average cost is of a general practitioner consultation *(a)* provided by the suppliers with which primary care trusts are in negotiation and *(b)* in the NHS as a whole; and if she will make a statement. [49559]

Mr. Byrne: The six primary care trusts (PCTs) taking part in the innovation in primary care contracting programme are:

Barking and Dagenham PCT
City and Hackney Teaching PCT
Hyndeburn and Ribble Valley PCT
South Sefton PCT
Bradford City Teaching PCT
Plymouth Teaching PCT

As the procurement process is still underway it is not possible to provide details about any of the provider organisations that the PCTs may be in discussion with as part of this programme.

Information on the average cost of a general practitioner consultation are not routinely collected centrally.

Herceptin

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will issue guidance to primary care trusts that social factors should not be used to decide whether women with HER-2 positive early stage breast cancer should be prescribed Herceptin if they are patients for whom it would otherwise be clinically appropriate treatment. [59580]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* It would not be appropriate for Ministers to dictate, or prejudge, the factors that might properly be taken into account by a primary care trust in assessing each case, beyond advising against refusals solely on the grounds of cost.

We have no plans to issue any guidance on this matter.

Insulin

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information is being provided to diabetic patients dependent on animal insulins from health care professionals on the availability of pork and beef insulins following the announcement by Novo Nordisk that it is discontinuing its pork insulin products; and if she will make a statement. [58653]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has been in discussion with Novo Nordisk about the discontinuation of its animal insulins. The company has put in place a comprehensive support and communications package for health care professionals and patients. Wockhardt, the remaining United Kingdom supplier, has also re-affirmed its commitment to continue supplying its animal insulins and has issued a statement to health care professionals and others. Health care professionals will therefore be able to communicate the changes to patients.

Learning Disabilities

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the effect of the Valuing People initiative on the services provided to people with learning difficulties; and if she will make a statement; [57114]

(2) what her latest estimate is of the number of people with learning difficulties *(a)* who have been assessed as needing support and *(b)* who have not received the assessed support from district care trusts in (i) Bradford district, (ii) Yorkshire and (iii) England in a one-year period; [57115]

(3) how much has been given to primary care trusts in *(a)* Bradford district, *(b)* Yorkshire and *(c)* England to provide support for people with learning disabilities in each of the last eight years. [57117]

Mr. Byrne: The Government's third report on learning disability, "Valuing People: Making things better" was published in November 2005. The report details what the Government has done during 2004 for people with learning disabilities and also details what our next steps will be. This is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/38/69/04123869.pdf

The number of people with learning difficulties who have been assessed as needing support is not held centrally.

The learning disability development fund (LDDF) was introduced in 2002–03. Revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs) from the LDDF are shown in the table.

From 2003–04 to 2005–06 LDDF capital allocations of £20 million per annum were made as part of strategic capital allocations to strategic health authorities (SHAs). The LDDF is not separately identified in SHA capital allocations.

The LDDF is only a small part of the funding available to PCTs for learning disabilities services. PCTs also have money available to them through specialist budgets, continuing care budgets and their mainstream budgets for example, where they can draw funding from to fund learning disabilities services. It is up to PCTs to decide how they allocate funds.

£000

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Bradford district[1]	183	188	193	407
Yorkshire[2]	1,763	1,927	1.973	4,138
England	19,598	21,052	19,232	41,595

[1] Bradford district is defined as Bradford Health Authority for 2002–03 and Airedale PCT, Bradford City PCT, Bradford South and West PCT and North Bradford PCT for 2003–04 onwards

[2] Yorkshire is defined as North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA), South Yorkshire SHA and West Yorkshire SHA.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will bring forward proposals to make the provision of respite care for people with learning disabilities a statutory duty of local authorities. [57225]

Mr. Byrne: This Government introduced the Carers Grant in 1999 to support councils in providing breaks and services for carers in England, including those who support people with learning disabilities. The grant has increased each year and has provided an extra £635 million over the past six years. We have confirmed that it will be worth £185 million in 2006–07 and in 2007–08. This will mean that, by 2008, we will have invested over £1 billion in services and support for carers of all groups.

In addition, we have listened to the considerable public support for carers throughout our extensive consultation process prior to the publication of the white paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". As a result, we propose to offer a new deal for carers to improve support for them through a range of measures. This will include ensuring that a short-term, home based respite support to all carers in crisis or emergency situations is established in each council's area.

Long-range Capacity Planning

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice she has issued to strategic health authorities on long-range capacity planning. [49787]

Jane Kennedy: A range of guidance was issued to strategic health authorities (SHAs) for the period 2006–07 to 2007–08. These include guidance on capacity planning and local delivery plans.

The Department has also issued guidance on "Developing an Estate Strategy" to achieve future service requirements; and on how to prepare a strategic service development plan for primary and community based health services for use by primary care trusts.

Copies of guidance is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Malawi

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* consultants, *(b)* doctors, *(c)* nurses and *(d)* dentists from Malawi were working in the NHS in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [58220]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not available centrally on the country of origin of national health service staff. The General Medical Council, General Dental Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council, hold information on the country of qualification of each person on their respective registers but not the country of origin.

Matrons

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* full-time equivalent and *(b)* headcount community matrons have been employed in the NHS in each month since June 2004. [57722]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the outcomes of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) consultation MLX 322 on fees published on 6 March 2006, when she expects the MHRA to discuss with industry associations how best to improve levels of *(a)* service, *(b)* communication and *(c)* monitoring. [58096]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency are now arranging meetings with pharmaceutical industry associations to discuss aspects of service, communication and monitoring improvements. Some meetings with individual associations have already taken place, and further discussions will take place in the coming weeks.

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency uses to ensure that deadlines for granting marketing authorisations for medicines are met. [55303]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) uses a number of information technology system and staff management mechanisms to monitor the progress and completion of marketing authorisation applications. These include the automatic system flagging of applications when critical dates are due and weekly status checks by the assessment managers. In addition, applications processed through European approval procedures are monitored using a Eudranet IT system which links all of the European Community medicines regulatory agencies.

Mental Health

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many young people are receiving treatment in secure units for mental illness resulting from cannabis abuse. [57433]

Mr. Byrne: Only a small number of persons fall into this category. Due to reasons of patient confidentiality, the Department is unable to provide a precise figure.

It is important to distinguish between cannabis causing mental illness and cannabis use that impacts upon a pre-existing mental illness.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people suffered from *(a)* schizophrenia and *(b)* catatonia in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [57597]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information about finished consultant episodes with a psychiatric primary diagnosis of either schizophrenia or catatonia between 1995–96 and 2004–05 is shown in the table.

	Primary diagnosis	
Data year	*Schizophrenia*	*Catatonia*
2004–05[1]	39,500	210
2003–04[1]	36,520	170
2002–03	43,620	200
2001–02	45,100	260
2000–01	45,130	200
1999–2000	45,360	220
1998–99	46,120	250
1997–98	45,470	220
1996–97	45,140	280
1995–96	45,490	300

[1] Figures for the years 2003–04 and 2004–05 have not yet been adjusted for shortfalls in data, and are ungrossed. Due to the sensitive nature of the data, figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have suffered from (i) severe depressive illness, (ii) catatonia and (iii) a prolonged or severe manic episode in each of the last five years for which information is available, broken down by age group. [57599]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information, by gender and age in England from 2000–01 to 2004–05, is shown in the tables.

Table 1: Severe depressive illness in males

	Data year				
Age	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]	*2004–05*[1]
Under 15	10	0	10	0	10
15 to 24	250	230	250	240	210
25 to 44	1,310	1,390	1,230	1,040	970
45 to 64	1,170	1,330	1,180	920	980
65 to 74	710	700	580	490	540
75 and over	790	790	700	540	530
Unknown	10	10	10	10	10
Total	4,240	4,460	3,960	3,250	3,240

Table 2: Catatonia in males

	Data year				
Age	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]	*2004–05*[1]
Under 15	0	0	0	0	0
15 to 24	40	30	20	20	30
25 to 44	60	100	60	50	60
45 to 64	20	30	30	20	20
65 to 74	0	0	0	0	10
75 and over	10	0	0	10	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Total	120	170	120	100	120

Table 3: Prolonged or severe mania in males

	Data year				
Age	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]	*2004–05*[1]
Under 15	0	10	0	0	0
15 to 24	450	420	380	360	370
25 to 44	1,940	2,020	1,870	1,480	1,550
45 to 64	1,310	1,360	1,310	1,040	1,120
65 to 74	230	350	290	240	280
75 and over	170	180	180	160	200
Unknown	10	10	10	10	0
Total	4,110	4,330	4,030	3,280	3,520

Table 4: Severe depressive illness in females

	Data year				
Age	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]	*2004–05*[1]
Under 15	10	10	10	10	10
15 to 24	290	270	280	240	250
25 to 44	2,180	2,350	2,250	1,680	1,580
45 to 64	2,250	2,230	2,160	1,810	1,770
65 to 74	1,400	1,340	1,230	940	930
75 and over	1,900	1,820	1,640	1,390	1,310
Unknown	30	20	40	20	10
Total	8,060	8,040	7,610	6,100	5,850

Table 5: Catatonia in females

Age	*Data year* *2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]	*2004–05*[1]
Under 15	0	0	0	0	0
15 to 24	10	20	10	10	10
25 to 44	30	40	30	30	30
45 to 64	30	30	30	20	30
65 to 74	10	0	10	10	10
75 and over	0	0	10	10	10
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Total	70	90	80	80	90

Table 6: Prolonged or severe mania in females

Age	*Data year* *2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–041*	*2004–051*
Under 15	10	10	20	0	0
15 to 24	350	350	340	280	260
25 to 44	2,090	2,270	2,030	1,610	1,690
45 to 64	1,870	1,990	1,960	1,540	1,570
65 to 74	560	630	520	470	520
75 and over	340	390	370	320	310
Unknown	0	0	20	10	0
Total	5,220	5,630	5,260	4,240	4,360

[1] Figures for the years 2003–04 and 2004–05 have not yet been adjusted for shortfalls in data and are ungrossed. Due to the sensitive nature of the data, figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long it took on average for a child to receive an initial assessment by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in the last period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [57372]

Mr. Byrne: In 2002, only 24 per cent. of new cases were seen within four weeks; by 2004 that figure had risen to 51 per cent.

The children's national service framework sets out the standards that need to be adopted by commissioners and providers of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Adoption of these standards will ensure that all children and young people with mental health problems will have access to timely, integrated and high quality mental health services.

Information on CAMHS waiting times is collected in the annual CAMHS mapping exercise which is shown in the table. The latest data relates to 2004. Further details of the mapping data is available on their website at www.camhsmapping.org.uk/.

Length of wait to be seen by CAMHS team	*Percentage of new CAMHS cases*
Under 4 weeks	51
4 to 13 weeks	31
13 to 26 weeks	11
Over 26 weeks	8

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations she has received regarding the mental health problems of children; and if she will make a statement. [57373]

Mr. Byrne: We regularly receive written representations about the development of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) from those working in the national health service, parents and other interested parties.

The CAMHS standard of the children's national service framework, published in September 2004, sets out the vision for CAMHS for the next 10 years. The Government's aim is that all children and young people, from birth to their 18th birthday, who have mental health problems, will have access to timely, integrated, high quality mental health services to ensure effective treatment and support, for them, the[illegible]arents or carers, and other family members.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have been prescribed drugs for mental health problems in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [57374]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not collected in the format requested. There are a number of mental health problems that affect children and young people that can be treated by medication. It is however for the clinical judgment of those caring for the child to decide whether they would benefit from medication or whether other treatment options should be explored first.

Mesothelioma

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research has been commissioned by her Department on the treatment and diagnosis of mesothelioma. [59002]

Jane Kennedy: None directly, but the Department is funding the national cancer research network, which is providing national health service infrastructure support for five mesothelioma studies funded by its research partners. Details of these studies can be found on the network's website at www.ncrn.org.uk.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. Details of individual projects, including a number concerned with the treatment and care of people with mesothelioma, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Mini-motorcycles

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been treated in accident and emergency departments for injuries resulting from accidents involving unregistered mini-motorcycles in *(a)* Greater Manchester, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* England in the last two years. [57386]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer March 2006]*: The information requested is not collected centrally.

National Programme for Information Technology

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr Lansley) of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1779W, on the National Programme for Information Technology, if she will

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break down the deployment by *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software; and what the age of the software was in each case. [57421]

Mr. Byrne: The national programme has delivered new systems to thousands of locations in the national health service. The extent of deployment of the programme's many software suppliers' systems across the five regional cluster areas, as at the end of January 2006, is available in the Library. The breakdown of information requested could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost. Most application software has been developed, or substantially refreshed, since 2004 .

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what programmes are running as part of the National Programme for IT; and how responsibility for each programme is divided between her Department, strategic health authorities and NHS trusts. [57517]

Mr. Byrne: The following products and services are being delivered through the National Programme for information technology (IT):

NHS Care Records Service

Choose and book electronic booking system

Electronic prescriptions service

New national network

Picture archiving and communications systems

IT supporting general practitioners (GPs), including the quality management and analysis system and a system for GP to GP record transfer

The email and directory service.

NHS Connecting for Health is the agency within the Department whose prime role is to procure and deliver the various strands of the programme, and to link these with relevant improvements in clinical processes and care services. Many millions of patients have already received improved and safer care as a result of the huge number of systems and services already made available through national programme developments.

Strategic health authorities are responsible for co-ordinating local IT investment and modernisation activities to deliver benefits from all of the national programme products and services to patients, staff and the national health service. SHAs and local NHS organisations, together with their NHS Connecting for Health local cluster teams, develop local implementation plans.

Trusts manage and deliver implementation within their organisations. They are responsible for designing and refining local procedures, communicating with the people involved and managing the overall change process. Local responsibility also includes clinical engagement and awareness, project resourcing, cleansing and preparing historical data for loading onto the new systems, training, and monitoring and reporting on the realisation of benefits. SHAs assist and support this process, for example by providing or coordinating SHA-wide specialist resources.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has spent directly on the NHS IT programme; how much has been paid to consultants in relation to the project; and how much consultants have claimed in expenses. [57519]

Mr. Byrne: The total programme and running cost expenditure by and on behalf of the Department on the national programme for informational technology in the national health service, from its inception in 2002 to 31 January 2006, was £1,024.319 million. £11.754 million (1.15 per cent.) of this total represents payments made to consultants. Accounting information does not record consultancy expenses separately from other consultancy costs, and the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 469W, on the NHS IT programme, how the contracts with *(a)* iSoft and *(b)* System C Healthcare fit into the programme. [57500]

Mr. Byrne: iSoft is a subcontractor of Accenture, the local service provider (LSP) for the national programme for information technology's North East and Eastern regional clusters. iSoft is also a subcontractor in the CSC Alliance, the LSP for the North West and West Midlands cluster. iSoft is the main supplier of clinical software for these clusters.

System C Healthcare is a subcontractor of both Accenture and the CSC Alliance, and provides expertise on the installation and implementation of patient record systems at national health service trusts.

NHS Staff

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and *(b)* consultants, broken down by specialism, were recruited from abroad in each (i) strategic health authority, (ii) Government office region and (iii) Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust in the last 12 months for which data is available; and what percentage of the total employed in each category these figures represent; [58458]

(2) how much was spent on recruiting *(a)* nurses and *(b)* consultants from abroad, broken down by specialism, in each (i) strategic health authority, (ii) Government office region and (iii) the Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust in the last 12 months for which data is available; and what percentage of the total employed in each category these figures represent. [58459]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

NHS Spending

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS spent per head of the population in *(a)* England, *(b)* London and *(c)* Hertfordshire in 2004–05. [52255]

Mr. Byrne: The net operating expenditure on health per person in strategic health authority areas and England, for 2004–05, is shown in the following table.

It is not possible to give figures for Hertfordshire, but the table provides information for the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority area. London is that area covered by the five London strategic health authorities.

Strategic health authority areas 2004–05	*Expenditure (£000)*	*Population*	*Expenditure per head (£)*
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority	1,747,876	1,649,615	1,059.57
London	10,683,902	7,446,741	1,434.71
England	61,501,753	50,050,385	1,228.80

Notes:

Expenditure is taken as the revenue resource limits of the strategic health authorities and primary care trusts within the strategic health authority areas.

Expenditure on general dental services and pharmaceutical services accounted for by the Dental Practice Board and Prescription Pricing Authority, respectively, are excluded. This expenditure cannot be included within the figures for the individual health bodies as they are not included in commissioner accounts.

Sources:

Audited strategic health authority summarisation forms 2004–05

Audited primary care trust summarisation schedules 2004–05

2003 based 2004 Office for National Statistics projections

NHS Tariff Uplift

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1322W, on the NHS Tariff Uplift, for what reasons the tariff uplift of 4 per cent. between 2005–06 and 2006–07 given in the Answer differs from the statement in paragraph 5.2, page 18 of her Department's document of 26 January 2006, The NHS in England: the operating framework in 2006–07, that the overall weighted increase across the full tariff in 2006–07 is 1.5 per cent. [57533]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 March 2006.]:* Paragraph 34 of 'Implemention Payments by Results: Technical Guidance 2006–07; Executive Summary', published on January 26 2006 and available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/73/76/04127376.pdf, explains the difference between the 4.0 per cent. tariff uplift and 1.5 per cent. increase in the overall weighted value of the tariff between 2005–06 and 2006–07. Copies of this document are available in the Library.

NICE Appraisals

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's technology appraisal on drug misuse will take into account the potential impact on the budgets of *(a)* the police and *(b)* other crime prevention and enforcement agencies. [57662]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)'s technology appraisals of naltrexone as a treatment for relapse prevention for drug misusers and methadone and buprenorphine for the treatment of opiate drug misuse will consider the potential impact on the national health service and the personal social services budgets. In addition work is being undertaken to ensure that NICE's independent advisory committee is aware of wider societal costs when making its recommendations.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who authorised the signing of the contract between the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) and Southampton Technology Assessment Centre (SHTAC) that provides that the cost-effectiveness model prepared by SHTAC for NICE for consideration in the technology appraisal of donepezil, rivastigmine, galantamine and memantine for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease cannot be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [58641]

Jane Kennedy: The contract, with the University of Southampton, for technology assessment review reports was authorised by the Department's director of research and development (R&D) and signed by an official on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health. It is a standard Departmental R&D contract, which invests intellectual property with the research contractor. Details of the relevant intellectual property policy is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/ResearchAndDevelopment.

Nurses (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses per 100 beds there have been in each hospital in Lancashire in each year since 1997. [58597]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff per 100 average daily number of available and occupied beds, by sector, national health service organisations 1997–98 to 2004–05

Organisation	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	152	159	177	153	160	165	157	168
Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	119	130	132	134	149	130	127	134
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	117	133	137	128	136	139	139	253
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	167	169	173	170	157	166	164	160

Notes:

1. Beds data are averaged over the period 1 April to 31 March

2. East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust was comprised of Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Care and Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust from 1997 to 2003

3. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust was comprised of Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Community Health Services and Blackpool Victoria from 1997 to 2002

4. Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust was comprised of Furness Hospitals NHS Trust, Westmorland Hospital NHS Trust and Lancaster Acute Hospitals NHS Trust in 1997

Source:

Department of Health form KH03 and NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census

Nursing Services

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases have been brought against the national health service for failure to provide free nursing services in the last five years; and what the outcome of each was. [59151]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Information regarding the number of applications for review of national health care continuing health care cases, or the outcomes of individual cases are not held centrally.

Orthodontics

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve orthodontic treatment provision in Shropshire. [51919]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department published guidance on 17 February 2006. This guidance "Factsheet 11—Orthodontic new PDS agreements and new GDS contracts" can be found on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/13/03/20/04130320.pdf.

This guideline takes into account discussions with the British Orthodontic Society and encompasses the new arrangements for orthodontic acre and treatment.

Osteomalacia/Osteoporosis

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of *(a)* osteomalacia and *(b)* osteoporosis was in the UK in each of the last five years; and what the annual expenditure on the treatment of osteomalacia and osteoporosis was in each year. [37135]

Mr. Byrne: Table 1 shows the incidence of osteomalacia and osteoporosis from 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Table 1: All diagnoses count of patients for selected diagnoses national health service hospitals England; 2000–01 to 2004–05

	Patient counts	
	Osteomalacia	Osteoporosis
2000–01	837	48,671
2001–02	1,050	56,454
2002–03	971	56,027
2003–04	911	57,849
2004–05	783	62,443

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

We do not hold data which link treatment to disease and therefore cannot say how much was spent on treating a specific disease. The drugs used to treat osteomalacia and osteoporosis are also used to treat other disease. We are unable to provide a breakdown of the expenditure by the disease it was used to treat.

The amount spent in each of the last five years are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Expenditure

	Cost (£ million)
2000	1.99
2001	2.43
2002	2.36
2003	2.40
2004	2.48

Parliamentary Questions

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer question number 38287 tabled on 13 December by the hon. Member for Romsey. [54223]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 6 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 1204W.

PCT Finances

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on the practice of primary care trusts (PCTs) in financial deficit borrowing money from other PCTs in financial surplus with a commitment to repayment in future years; what guidance she has issued to PCTs on this; and whether she has specified appropriate levels of interest. [57897]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Strategic health authorities (SHAs) are responsible for the financial management of the organisations within their area and for delivering overall financial balance across the SHA. Where a primary care trust (PCT) is overspending the SHA can agree to provide the organisation additional resources in the form of repayable planned support. The support should be agreed during the annual planning stage and should only be provided to overspending organisations on the basis that they deliver a plan to recover their financial position over an agreed period.

SHA have discretion in how they operate the system of planned support. The Department does not specify whether they should charge or pay interest to PCT. In addition, since the SHA can only provide additional resources to an overspending organisation where another organisation underspends, the system of planned support operates on the basis of local agreement.

In 2006–07, the Department has instructed SHAs that there should be no more provision of planned support. This will increase the transparency of the system because all overspending will be recorded in the annual accounts of the organisation. The Department has explained the system changes to SHAs in guidance for 2006–07 financial planning.

Physiotherapists

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many trainee physiotherapists are expected to qualify in 2006; [58105]

(2) how many new vacancies have been created for physiotherapists in the last 12 months; and how many of these vacancies were for newly-qualified physiotherapists. [58106]

Mr. Byrne: Information relating to the number of new vacancies is not collected centrally.

In 2003–04, 2,343 national health service physiotherapy training places were commissioned and students who successfully complete the programme will graduate in 2006.

Pregnancy

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to enable each pregnant woman to be cared for by one midwife throughout pregnancy; [58599]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to provide more choice for women in *(a)* (i) where and (ii) how their babies are delivered and *(b)* the use of pain relief in labour. [58600]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The maternity standard of the national service framework for children outlines the importance of continuity of support by a named midwife throughout a woman's pregnancy. This is reinforced by the manifesto commitment, which states that by 2009

> "every woman should be supported by a named midwife throughout her pregnancy",

and that she will have a choice over

> "where and how women have their baby and what pain relief to use".

More recently, in the White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say", the Government have made three further commitments to achieving a world-class maternity service.

Preventative Technologies Grant

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health over which two years the Preventative Technologies Grant described at paragraph 5.38 of the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' will be allocated; and how much of the grant is being provided in each of the two years, broken down by local authority. [57725]

Mr. Byrne: The preventative technologies grant will be allocated in years 2006–07 and 2007–08; £30 million to be allocated in 2006–07 and £50 million in 2007–08. A local authority circular setting out the local authority allocations for both years is planned to be issued before 31 March 2006.

Rehabilitation Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for her Department's scoping review of rehabilitation services in health and social care; and what types of rehabilitation services will be covered by the review. [58682]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* Completion of this study is expected in April. The study has looked in broad terms at all aspects of rehabilitation provided by both the national health service and social care, other than those relating to mental health, as well as drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

Residential Care

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in West Lancashire receiving residential care have the cost of the care paid for them by the NHS. [58433]

Mr. Byrne: In the local delivery planning return for March 2005, West Lancashire primary care trust reported that is was funding continuing care placements for 121 people.

The primary responsibility for supporting people who cannot afford to meet the full cost of residential care from their own resources rests with the council with social services responsibility. The latest information on local authority supported residents, including residents in the area of Lancashire county council, is available in the statistical bulletin 'Community Care Statistics 2005: Supported Residents (Adults) England' on the NHS health and social care information website at www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs

Rochdale Primary Care Trust

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* NHS clerical, administrative and management staff, *(b)* NHS hospital doctors and GPs and *(c)* NHS nurses and midwives there were in Rochdale primary care trust in each year since 1990. [58863]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The information is not available in the requested format. The following table shows the hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) doctors[1], specified non-medical staff, general medical practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars[2] and practice staff[3] working within Rochdale primary care trust, as at 30 September each year from 2001 to 2004.

Number (headcount)

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Rochdale PCT				
All HCHS doctors[1]	n/a	12	12	15
All general medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[2]	73	72	75	76
GP registrars	2	3	3	6
GP retainers	1	1	0	0
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	n/a	152	154	156
NHS infrastructure support	n/a	63	69	95
Clerical and administrative	n/a	41	44	73
Manager and senior manager	n/a	22	25	21
GP practice staff[3]	216	256	243	239
GP practice nurses	37	37	38	40

n/a = not available.

[1] Excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are general practitioner (GPs) working part time in hospitals.

[2] General medical practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars, includes contracted GPs, general medical services

(GMS) others and personal medical services (PMS) others. Prior to September 2004 this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

[3] Practice staff includes: practice nurses, direct patient care, admin and clerical and other.

Sources:

Medical and Dental Workforce Census,

General and Personal Medical Services Statistics,

Non-Medical Workforce Census NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Section 64

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for the distribution of Section 64 scheme grants; and if she will make a statement. [57667]

Mr. Byrne: Final decisions about the Section 64 General Scheme of Grants for 2006–07 have yet to be taken. An announcement will be made when the central budget review is completed.

Sexual Offences Act

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions there have been of care workers under sections 38 to 41 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, broken down by profession. [58715]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform are provided in the following table. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of the profession of the defendants as this information is not collected.

Defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under sections 38 to 41 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, England and Wales 2004[1]

Number

Offence code	*Principal statute*	*Offence description*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
7017	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.38(1–3)	Care workers: sexual activity with a male person with a mental disorder—penetration	1	0
7018	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.38(1–3)	Care workers: sexual activity with a female person with a mental disorder—penetration	1	0
7019	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.38(1,2,4)	Care workers: sexual activity with a male person with a mental disorder—no penetration	0	0
7020	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.38(1,2,4)	Care workers: sexual activity with a female person with a mental disorder—no penetration	2	0
7021	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.39(1–3)	Care workers: causing or inciting sexual activity (person with a mental disorder)—penetration	0	0
7022	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.39(1,2,4)	Care workers: causing or inciting sexual activity (person with a mental disorder)—no penetration	0	0
7023	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.40	Care workers: sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder	0	0
7024	Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.41	Care workers: causing a person with a mental disorder impeding choice to watch a sexual act	0	0

1 These data are on the principal offence basis.

Source:

RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Strategic Health Authorities

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much she estimates will be top sliced from strategic health authority budgets in the year 2006–07; [58338]

(2) if she will reverse the decision to top slice primary care trust budgets to meet financial targets. [59395]

Jane Kennedy: The requirement for national health service organisations to bank reserves with their strategic health authority (SHA) was announced by the Department in "The NHS in England: the operating framework for 2006–07".

The amount of reserve to be banked and the terms of the agreement will be agreed with their SHA. SHAs are responsible for the financial management of the organisations within their area and for delivering financial planning targets agreed with the Department. Holding financial reserves is a prudent approach to financial management, so the Department is encouraging SHAs to hold reserves because it will help them deliver their financial targets.

There are no plans to top slice SHA budgets, but any net overspending by organisations within a SHA area in 2005–06 will result in a reduced allocation in 2006–07 for that SHA in line with Government resource accounting and budgeting rules on the carry forward of over and under spending.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what date the interim chief executive posts for the new strategic health authorities are planned *(a)* to become operational and *(b)* to end; [56559]

(2) what job descriptions her Department has produced for the interim chief executive post of the new strategic health authorities; [56560]

(3) when the appointments of the interim chief executive posts for the new strategic health authorities were announced. [56561]

Mr. Byrne: The strategic health authority (SHA) chief executives remain in post until the consultation on SHA and primary care trust reconfiguration has ended and Ministers make decisions about establishing any new SHAs.

SHA boards remain statutorily accountable until any new SHAs are established.

The Department has designated a transition lead for each potential new SHA area to ensure there is business continuity should new SHAs take over from July 2006. The transitional arrangements started on 1 February 2006 and will operate until any new SHAs are in place from July 2006. The Department has agreed a list of transition tasks which will be overseen by the transition leads. These are:

business continuity;

2006–07 planning;

managing the change;

motivation and engagement;

communication.

There is no separate job description for the role.

Syringes

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that syringes required to administer medicines to babies orally will be available on prescription; and if she will make a statement. [58104]

Jane Kennedy: For such a specialist syringe to be prescribed on the national health service by a general practitioner or nurse prescriber it would need to be listed under Part IX of the Drug Tariff. It is up to a manufacturer or supplier to make an application for inclusion of suitable products on this list, which is managed by the Prescription Pricing Authority.

There is provision in certain circumstances for patients to be provided with an oral syringe. When the prescribed dose of an oral liquid medicine is not five millilitres or whole multiples of five millilitres and the pack does not already include a suitable measuring devices, the pharmacy dispensing the medicines should provide a five millilitre plastic oral syringe.

Tourette's Syndrome

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what help and support is available for *(a)* parents, *(b)* professionals and *(c)* individuals dealing with Tourette's syndrome; [58360]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to ensure that health professionals are trained to recognise the symptoms of Tourette's syndrome; [58361]

(3) what steps her Department is taking to improve the general awareness of Tourette's syndrome. [58362]

Mr. Byrne: A range of social, psychological and pharmacological interventions are available to support people living with Tourette's syndrome, their families and their carers. It is the responsibility of local health and social care organisations to commission appropriate services based on local needs.

The national service framework for long-term conditions (NSF) has been published to help drive up quality and reduce variations in the care provided by health and social care organisations. Through its quality requirements, the NSF addresses a key range of issues including the need for equitable access to a range of services; good quality information and support for patients and carers and the ability to see a specialist and get the right investigations and diagnosis as quickly as possible.

The Government recognise that one of the key determinants in delivering high quality and effective patient care is that health professionals have an appropriate level of skills and knowledge. Addressing the training needs of health professionals is, however, the responsibility of the appropriate regulatory bodies. They set standards for the pre-registration training of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, approve the education institutions that provide the training and determine the curricula.

Post-registration training needs for national health service staff are decided against local national health service priorities, through appraisal processes and training needs analyses informed by local delivery plans and the needs of the service. Local authorities and health service providers decide how best to provide services to meet the needs of the individuals.

We have no specific plans to raise public awareness of the symptoms of Tourette's syndrome. NHS Direct, NHS Direct on-line and NHS Direct interactive have been established to provide advice and information on health and self-care. Through these services, people have access to information on a range of conditions and illnesses, including Tourette's syndrome.

Training Abroad (Cumbria)

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff from health trusts in Cumbria have been abroad on training courses in the last five years; and at what cost in each case. [58729]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Turnaround Directors

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what she expects the total cost of turnaround directors to be; and whether the costs will be borne by *(a)* primary care trusts, *(b)* strategic health authorities and *(c)* the Department of Health. [58182]

Jane Kennedy: The turnaround teams were announced by the Secretary of State in a written ministerial statement on 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 37WS.

The first stage of this is a baseline assessment, the aim of which is to ensure there is an agreed understanding of the local financial problem and that actions are in hand to address this. This was funded by the Department.

Following the assessment, the local national health service will identify the actions needed to return the organisations to financial balance and what tailored support is needed to support local management. For the most challenged organisations, the first three months of a turnaround director will be funded by the Department. Otherwise, it is for the local NHS to decide on the funding streams.

The Department will contract for the strategic health authority (SHA) turnaround directors to work alongside the transition SHA leaders.

The Department has a budget of £6 million for turnaround work in 2005–06, which is expected to be far outweighed by the benefits of turnaround. Values of individual contracts are to be treated as commercial in confidence.

I envisage that the turnaround teams will be needed to the end of 2006–07, when I expect the NHS to have returned to financial balance.

Waiting Times

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish the results of her Department's diagnostics waiting time data collection. [58287]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The new diagnostic data collection began in January 2006. As with many new data collections, it may take a number of months of collection before the data is of sufficient quality to be publishable. We hope to commence routine monthly publication of the data shortly to inform 18 weeks preparations.

Work Force Development Confederation Budgets

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total spending on workforce development confederation budgets was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the reasons are for the difference in the two figures. [57726]

Mr. Byrne: The total spending on workforce development confederation budgets was £3,436 million in 2003–04 and £3,820 million in 2004–05. The increase in expenditure arises from medical school expansion, the additional costs of increased numbers of non-medical professional staff in training and the additional costs of inflation.

Silverlands Mansion, Surrey

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the sale by her Department of the Silverlands mansion in Chertsey, Surrey. [55429]

Mr. Byrne: From October 1999 to the date of sale the Government spent £3,175,000 (average £46,691 per month) on building and maintenance works and £1,770,000 (average £26,029 per month) on site security relating to Silverlands.

The property was sold by the Department on 23 May 2005.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 21 March 2006

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Eaga Partnership Initiative

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in Birkenhead have had central heating installed under the Eaga Partnership Initiative. [59561]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The number of households that have received central heating measures from the warm front scheme in Birkenhead each year since June 2000 are as follows:

	Households
2000–01[1]	46
2001–02	152
2002–03	90
2003–04	78
2004–05	57
2005–06[2]	44
Total	467

[1] From June 2000.

[2] To date.

Varietal Genetic Use Restriction Technologies

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which *(a)* Government and *(b)* non-governmental agencies have a role in assessing the potential socio-economic impacts of varietal genetic use restriction technologies. [59295]

Mr. Morley: Under article 31 of the Directive 2001/18/EC the Commission is bound to provide every three years a report which includes, among other things, an assessment of the socio-economic implications of deliberate releases and placing on the market of GMOs.

The criteria for the assessment of a genetically modified organism (GMO) incorporating varietal genetic use restriction technologies set out in the directive does not include a requirement to assess the socio-economic impacts.

Socio-economic impacts and GM technology is a factor developing countries can take into account under the Cartagena Protocol which the UK has ratified.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with whom *(a)* she, *(b)* Ministers in her Department and *(c)* officials in her Department have held discussions on varietal genetic use restriction technologies since 1 January 2005; and when those meetings were held. [59371]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Varietal genetic use restriction technologies were discussed recently at a meeting which my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity held with a number of representatives of non-governmental organisations on 15 February 2006. This was followed up by a meeting with officials on 6 March.

These technologies are a subject which has arisen several times in meetings attended both by Ministers and officials of this Department since 1 January 2005, mostly as part of a general discussion on GMOs. Unfortunately, however, no records are kept which would allow the compilation of a definitive and comprehensive list of all the meetings attended by Ministers and officials at which these technologies were discussed since that date. None involved outside parties.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Abortion and Poverty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department gave to the International Planned Parenthood Federation to produce the booklet 'Death and Denial: Unsafe Abortion and Poverty'. [59460]

Mr. Thomas: DFID did not make a specific grant to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) for the production of the booklet "Death and Denial: Unsafe Abortion and Poverty". We did however ask the IPPF to produce this report when agreeing our overall core funding to the organisation, to help raise awareness of the consequences of unsafe abortion. DFID's core funding to support the work of the IPPF in 2006 is £7.5 million.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the evidential basis is for the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the foreword to the booklet 'Death and Denial: Unsafe Abortion and Poverty', that each year 19 million women have no other choice than to have an unsafe abortion; if he will place in the Library the documentation which supports the statement; and if he will make a statement. [59474]

Mr. Thomas: The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that of the 46 million women who have an abortion each year, 19 million are estimated to be unsafe. That is, carried out by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimum medical standards. They do so because they do not wish to go through with an un-intended or unwanted pregnancy. One important reason for this is that many millions of women still lack access to reproductive health and family planning services, and thus have no choice about when and if to have children.

Further information is available on the WHO website

http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/unsafe_abortion/

Asian Tsunami

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of funds given by his Department to assist with the recovery from the Asian tsunami have been *(a)* allocated and *(b)* spent; and what plans his Department has for the unspent funds. [58802]

Mr. Thomas: Following the tsunami, the Government allocated £75 million to meet the immediate needs of those affected. To date £68 million has been disbursed through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement and non-governmental organisations such as Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, CAFOD and Help the Aged. The balance will be allocated for disaster risk reduction and early warning initiatives across the affected region. We are currently looking at proposals for programmes to utilise these funds.

The complexity of the response and the changing situation on the ground meant that some organisations have not been able to spend funds according to their original timetable. However, where people still need help, DFID has allowed some partner organisations to extend the end date of relief programmes using DFID funds if we decide that the programmes remain appropriate.

In circumstance where DFID judges that extending the life of a programme would be of little value to those affected by the tsunami and is not an appropriate use of UK funds we will request that the balance of the DFID grant be returned. The UK will not provide financing in advance of need as this money could be usefully spent reducing poverty and saving lives in other parts of the world.

The Disasters Emergency Committee website (www. tsunami.dec.org.uk). contains details and an evaluation of how the major UK non-governmental organisations (NGO)s utilised the funds they were given.

DFID will allocate £65 million to meet longer term reconstruction needs. From this amount, £60 million has been committed to Indonesia. Of the £60 million, £13.5 million has already been allocated. Some of the funds have been put into a multi-donor trust fund which provides grants for a range of reconstruction activities including housing, infrastructure, and land titling projects. Additional funds have been used to support the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s livelihoods programme and to support a range of smaller technical assistance packages. Of this, £13.5 million, we estimate that £12.5 million has actually been spent. It is difficult to be precise about how much of the UK funds have been spent from the Multi-Donor Fund because it is a pooled funding mechanism. The Multi-Donor Fund estimates that it will have spent $102 million of the $228 million received from donors by the end of March.

We are looking to spend the remaining funds over the next 2 to 3 years. Our immediate priority is to support urgent livelihoods activities and other initiatives which will help to build a sustainable peace in Aceh. We have pledged an additional £20 million to the Multi-Donor Fund, but we will look to allocate this and any remaining funds as needs are identified.

The remaining £5 million balance of the £65 million has been allocated to India and Sri Lanka. The recovery programme in Sri Lanka is fully financed, but DFID allocated £2 million to help speed up implementation of reconstruction programmes and to ensure equitable distribution of assistance. To date, £1.3 million has been spent on technical assistance and expertise. The remaining funds will be spent in 2006–07 to help people affected by the tsunami re-establish their livelihoods.

In India technical assistance worth £3 million has been provided to help ensure effective, transparent and equitable programming of relief.

Avian Influenza

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance is being provided to *(a)* Nigeria, *(b)* Niger, *(c)* Cameroon and *(d)* other African countries to help combat the spread of avian influenza. [59342]

Mr. Thomas: The threat of avian influenza is of global significance and requires a co-ordinated global response. On 18 January, at the International Pledging Conference on Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza in Beijing, the UK pledged £20 million to help achieve this. We also expressed our willingness to consider requests from developing country Governments to reprioritise DFID country programmes to finance work on influenza. We will ensure that UK support is co-ordinated with the efforts of individual countries and other international donors.

In Nigeria, DFID has committed £800,000 to combat the spread of the disease. Of this, £250,000 was used for the immediate purchase of 15,000 personal protection kits for UN Agencies to distribute through the Nigerian Ministries of Agriculture and Health to front-line workers and those involved in surveillance of the disease. The remaining £550,000 has been given as a grant to the World Health Organisation (WHO) which is leading the international response to avian influenza. The WHO will use the funds to support the Government of Nigeria at both federal and state level in reducing the opportunity of human infection, ensuring that the surveillance systems are in place and active, and undertaking assessment of laboratory facilities.

The UK has not provided direct assistance to Niger or Cameroon to tackle avian influenza. We do not have major programmes in either country, though we do support forestry reform in Cameroon and have provided significant humanitarian assistance to Niger. We are closely monitoring the situation in both countries.

Through our ongoing involvement in Africa, DFID is keeping abreast of countries' own plans and the activities of international organisations and donors relating to avian flu. We are in regular discussion with African countries about possible UK support to help develop and implement their influenza strategies. For example, DFID has committed £1 million to prevention and control of the disease in Ethiopia. £700,000 will be used for early detection, prevention and control and £300,000 will be used to establish a national focal point to address the threat posed by a human influenza pandemic.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total UK aid allocation for Burma was in each of the last five years; and how much of the allocated budget was spent. [52208]

Mr. Thomas: Over the last five years the Department of International Development (DFID) allocation for assistance and spend in to Burma has been:

£ million

	Allocation	*Spend*
2000–01	[1]—	1.39
2001–02	[1]—	2.27
2002–03	6.16	7.02
2003–04	4	3.72
2004–05	6	6.07

[1] no budget

Note:

In 2000–01 and 2001–02 there was no set budget—expenditure was in response to appeals for humanitarian assistance.

The significant difference between allocation and spend which occurred in 2002–03 is due to the fact that DFID made faster than expected progress in the development of a programme in response to the challenge of HIV and AIDS in Burma.

Flooding (Mozambique)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the Government of Mozambique concerning flood-preparedness levels around the Zambesi river; what assistance has been (i) requested, (ii) pledged and (iii) delivered to respond to a flooding of the Zambesi river; and if he will make a statement. [59588]

Mr. Thomas: DFID maintains close contact with Mozambique's National Institute for the Management of Natural Disasters (INGC) which is responsible for managing Mozambique's preparation for and response to flooding. We have already responded by providing £40,000 of funding to Save the Children UK to supply emergency kits to some of the people who were displaced by the floods earlier this year. We will continue to monitor the situation through the INGC to assess whether further funding is needed.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the humanitarian impact of flooding in the Zambesi and Sofala provinces in Mozambique and *(b)* the likelihood of such flooding occurring in 2006; and if he will make a statement. [59637]

Mr. Thomas: DFID maintains close contact with Mozambique's National Institute for the Management of Natural Disasters (INGC) which is responsible for monitoring the situation in co-ordination with the National Water Department (DNA). Flooding has been most intensive in the lower Zambezi and Pungue river basins. Nonetheless, the DNA is optimistic that any further large scale flooding on the Zambezi will be avoided, because the amount of water entering the lake behind the Cahora Bassa dam is falling, thus reducing the need, to increase discharges into the lower river. Based on historic patterns the likelihood of more extensive flooding will diminish from the end of March.

Guatemala

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the recovery process in Guatemala following Hurricane Stan in 2005. [55432]

Mr. Thomas: The relief effort in Guatemala in the aftermath of Hurricane Stan is coordinated by the Guatemalan Government Agency, CONRED (Coordinadora Nacional para la Reduccion de Desastres) and involves a wide number of Government Departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), donors and local community groups. Rehabilitation programmes are planned for periods of six-12 months and activities have begun for many of the 1,063 affected communities.

DFID provided £253,000 to the emergency in Guatemala and El Salvador, channelled through Plan International UK and CARE International UK. £172,000 of this is benefiting Guatemala. This is in addition to £690,000 provided as the UK share of European Commission assistance following the disaster. DFID has kept informed of the recovery process through the reports of Plan International and CARE International, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and through contact with the Government of Guatemala.

The most affected parts of the country were the south coast and the western region where 59,000 people were displaced. Since October 2005, at least 12,310 families have been given temporary familial shelters or have been reintegrated into their communities. The Guatemalan Government have undertaken extensive surveys of potential new land for these communities to minimise future risk of exposure to floods and mud-slides.

A key reconstruction priority was ensuring access to safe reliable water, and much of the rehabilitation effort has focused on this. Waterborne disease remains a risk for affected communities and the Ministry of Health have been supported in the provision of transportation services, basic health kits including mosquito nets, and training for communities in health and nutrition awareness. Overall progress in reconstructing sanitation units has been slow, which in many cases has only reached 10 per cent. of target so far. However, some areas have benefited from intensive NGO efforts to ensure safe water, with as many as 10,000 water filters being provided and treatment plants in three municipalities. The installation of systems has been undertaken in close conjunction with local government authorities and communities to ensure sustainability.

Children have been badly affected by the hurricane the most, and those who remain in shelters will continue to receive psychological and educational support from rehabilitation partners. A continuing concern is the restoration of the livelihoods of the communities affected, either through agricultural support to those who returned to their homes, or through income generation opportunities for those who remain in shelters or have been relocated. DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) have been in discussions with the Guatemalan Government to assess how those worst affected by Stan can begin to rehabilitate their livelihoods.

Indonesia

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid has been given to Indonesia through *(a)* the Global Opportunities Fund, *(b)* the Global Conflict Prevention Fund and *(c)* other sources of Government funds in the last 10 years; and whether conditions relating to (i) the promotion of religious tolerance, (ii) equality under the law and (iii) openness and transparency of government were attached to that funding. [60523]

Mr. Thomas: Assistance has been provided as follows:

The Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) was set up in 2003–04. Since then, the UK has approved over £2.4 million bilateral expenditure to Indonesia for ongoing projects engaging with the Islamic World and Counter Terrorism assistance.

The Global Conflict Prevention Pool, which has been operational since 2001–02 has contributed a total of £3.7 million to conflict prevention related project work in Indonesia.

Bilateral aid to Indonesia over the last 10 years

	Amount (£ million)
1995–06	15.2
1996–97	38.5
1997–98	48.7
1998–99	25.4
1999–2000	58.5
2000–01	28.2
2001–02	18.1
2002–03	42.6
2003–04	17.4
2004–05	25.5

Source:
Statistics on International Development 2000–01 to 2004–05

The figures are for aid classified as official development assistance by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the majority comes from the aid budget.

Aid is allocated for specific purposes, including equality and governance. Individual aid allocations have not been tied to specific conditions on religious tolerance, equality under the law and openness and transparency of government. Such issues are taken into account in considering the case for aid, alongside other criteria.

Palestine

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what proportion of UK funding for the Palestinian Territories in 2005–06 is intended for *(a)* humanitarian relief and *(b)* budgetary support; and if he will make a statement; [59888]

(2) whether UK funding for the Palestinian Territories makes a distinction between budgetary aid and humanitarian aid; and if he will make a statement. [59889]

Mr. Thomas: The UK defines humanitarian assistance as that which is intended to 'save lives', alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters. This is distinct from budgetary aid which is the provision of funds directly to a partner government's central exchequer in support of that Government's programmes. During the current financial year 2005–06 we expect to provide a total of £15 million for humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees, £10 million for budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority and around £4.58 million for other development projects to assist the Palestinians, including technical assistance.

This is a period of considerable political change following the recent elections where Hamas won an absolute majority. We are currently reviewing how best to support poverty reduction for the Palestinians in this context.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the contribution by the UK was to the World Bank Public Financial Management Reform Trust Funds' emergency $42 million release of funds to the Palestinian Authority in March; and if he will make a statement. [59890]

Mr. Thomas: The UK released £5 million in March, to the World Bank's Reform Trust fund for transfer to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The UK's share of the contribution made by the European Community to the Reform Trust Fund is equivalent to a further £2.3 million.

Following the Palestinian elections, the PA is being run by an interim administration. This caretaker government needs money to provide essential services such as health and education and to pay salaries. The Quartet, comprising the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia, agreed on 30 January 2006 to take measures to stabilise the caretaker government's finances. The Palestinian Ministry of Finance has assured Trust Fund donors that all of the money released in March will be spent before any new government takes over.

Philippines

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what percentage of funding to the Philippines in 2006–07 will be directed at measures for better government. [55501]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not maintain a bilateral programme to the Philippines, however we do finance a number of small programmes through non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In the 2006–07 financial year, we expect to spend some £109,000 through two NGO programmes. One will work with local government to help prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS, the other works with minority groups to help them articulate and secure their rights.

Slavery

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of a possible link between poverty and contemporary forms of slavery: and what steps he is taking to support poverty reduction strategies in countries where such practices are used. [60487]

Mr. Thomas: Last year in its Global Report the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that around the world, at least 12.3 million people were victims of forced labour. The report makes clear that poverty and social exclusion are at the root of much contemporary slavery and forced labour.

The Government supports long-term programmes to help tackle the poverty and social injustice which makes people vulnerable to exploitation. It also supports programmes that specifically target forced labour. DFID has provided over £2 million to support the ILO's Special Action Programme on Forced Labour and an additional £2 million for the ILO's regional programmes in West Africa and South East Asia. DFID has also committed almost £14 million to ILO and non-governmental organisation programmes in South East Asia to stop the trafficking of children for forced labour.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59292]

Mr. Thomas: There is no universal definition of a small firm. While several criteria can be used to define a small firm, including annual value of sales turnover and value of capital assets, the most common defining feature is number of workers employed. DFID regards "small" firms to be those with 1 to 50 employees. Firms employing over 50 employees are considered medium-sized. In international development usage, small firms with less than 10 employees are generally termed "micro enterprises". Modern small firms differ from micro enterprises in several important respects, namely:

They are generally full-time, permanent and legally registered businesses

They use paid, rather than family labour

They operate from dedicated premises separate from the household

They possess investments in fixed assets

They may use modern technology

Street Children

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department provides to help tackle the poverty of street children in *(a)* Honduras and *(b)* Guatemala. [59751]

Mr. Thomas: Street Children in Latin America are victims of deprivation and exclusion. Overwhelming poverty, unemployment and social dislocation leave many children with no option other than to leave home to find work and by-pass the education system. Street children are excluded from accessing key services such as health and education. They are powerless and lack supportive kinship and social networks. Many street children suffer and are at greater risk from organised violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDs.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is assisting street children in Honduras and Guatemala through our support to the international financial institutions, the European Commission and our civil society partners. DFID is supporting the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDE) to strengthen their programmes to tackle the widespread poverty, inequality and social exclusion that forces many children on to the street. DFID assistance through the IDB has included $145,000 to build the capacity of Guatemalan non-governmental organisations and public sector officials to reintegrate street children back into society. Our contributions to the European Commission are also assisting the Commission to implement a social cohesion programme in Latin America.

DFID contributed £1 million in 2004 to support participation of both civil society and the Government of Honduras in developing their poverty reduction strategy. The Strategy includes an analysis of child poverty and the plight of street children and commits the Government to reduce child labour, improve the quality and equity of education and improve child health coverage. DFID support to the Save the Children Fund (SCF) through a global agreement has also assisted the SCF Honduras office to work on youth justice initiatives.

Sudan

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of the recent restrictions on the operation of humanitarian organisations in Western Darfur. [59712]

Hilary Benn: Up to now the impact of restrictions on the operation of humanitarian organisations in West Darfur has been minimal, despite the reduction in the number of international staff working in the region. This has been due to the agencies themselves anticipating the deteriorating security situation last January, and pre-positioning relief materials. This has enabled basic water, food and medical supplies to be provided through national staff and local non-governmental organisations (NGO)s.

However, security restrictions mean that the UN and NGOs can undertake only emergency life saving interventions in some parts of West Darfur. This, and the reduction in staff numbers, means that the international community is now less able to respond to a major challenge such as an outbreak of disease or a further large-scale displacement of the population. Reduced staff numbers mean that the UN's ability to afford protection of civilians is also more limited.

We remain closely engaged with NGOs and the UN and stand ready to provide additional assistance if required.

Uganda

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of girls attended primary school in *(a)* Uganda and *(b)* northern Uganda in the last year for which figures are available. [59709]

Mr. Thomas: At present, data is not available on primary school enrolment rates by gender; however, the Government of Uganda does measure the ratio of girls to boys attending primary school. The most recent information suggests that the ratio of girls to boys in primary education in the country as a whole is 99 per cent., highlighting that the number of girls in primary school is very nearly equal to the number of boys. This information is not broken down specifically for northern Uganda because of the problems that population movement and security have created for the collection of data.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of children had access to primary schooling in *(a)* Uganda and *(b)* northern Uganda in the last year for which figures are available. [59710]

Mr. Thomas: The Government of Uganda measures net primary school attendance, rather than access to primary schooling. Net primary attendance refers to the proportion of children of primary school age who enrol in primary school. According to the 2002–03 National Household Survey (UNHS) net primary school attendance in Uganda is 86 per cent, and 77 per cent. in northern Uganda.

Northern Uganda is defined as the five main conflict affected districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Apac and Lira. However, the 2002–03 UNHS did not cover the Pader district, and some parts of the Kitgum and Gulu districts, due to security problems.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the rate of HIV/AIDS infection was in *(a)* Uganda and *(b)* northern Uganda in the last period for which figures are available. [59711]

Mr. Thomas: According to the 2004–05 HIV/AIDS survey, the adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Uganda is 6.4 per cent., and 8.3 per cent. in northern Uganda. Northern Uganda is defined as the five main conflict affected districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Apac and Lira.

United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 713W, on the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), if he will list other donors who *(a)* announced support for UNFPA and *(b)* signalled an increase in their contribution to UNFPA; and if he will make a statement. [59464]

Mr. Thomas: Donors who announced support for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2002, when the US withdrew funding were, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Viet Nam, the UK, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Norway, Canada, Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

Additional contributions of $18.8 million were received to during the course of 2002. These contributions were received from nine major donors namely, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and the UK, who increased its contribution from $15 million in 2001–02 to $18 million in 2002–03 and 2003–04. The UK is now providing £80 million core support over its four year funding framework from 2004–05 to 2007–08.

In 2003, six major donors pledged additional increases; Canada, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, and Sweden.

In DFIDS's view, the UNFPA's activities are in strict conformity with the unanimously adopted Programme of Action of the International Committee on Population and Development (ICPD).

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crimes (Service Personnel)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases relating to crimes committed by soldiers on active service are under consideration by his department. [59693]

The Solicitor-General: The decision to prosecute is on for the prosecuting authorities who may consult the law officers.

There are four cases relating to crimes committed by soldiers on active service, where my department has been consulted.

In three of those cases, the Army Prosecuting Authority has directed that there should be a court martial and these will take place in the coming months.

The Crown Prosecution Service is considering the other case.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Alcohol Sales Licences

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many licences for the sale of alcohol over 24 hours have been granted in Tamworth in the last 12 months. [58087]

Alun Michael: Tamworth borough council licensing department confirms that there has been one application for a 24 hour alcohol sales licence in the last 12 months. This was from a supermarket and was successful.

Arms Exports (Iraq)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether ministerial approval was sought for the export of 20,878 semi-automatic pistols to Iraq referred to in the "Second Quarterly Report on Strategic Export Controls 2004." [59358]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is responsible for issuing all export licences. The DTI Export Control Organisation carries out this function on his behalf. Information on whether ministerial approval was specifically sought in relation to individual licensing decisions is exempt from disclosure as its release would prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the 20,878 semi-automatic pistols exported to Iraq referred to in the Second Quarterly Strategic Export Controls Report 2004 carried serial numbers. [59359]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Yes. Each of the pistols in question was embossed with a unique reference number.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the *(a)* Ministry of Defence and *(b)* Foreign and Commonwealth Office were consulted in respect of the semi-automatic pistols exported to Iraq referred to in the Second Quarterly Report of the Strategic Export Controls Report 2006. [59696]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statement made on 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 81WS by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has received evidence that the parties associated with the export to Iraq of semi-automatic pistols referred to in the Second Quarterly Strategic Export Controls Report 2004 made *(a)* false, *(b)* misleading and *(c)* incomplete statements concerning the final use and destination of the weapons. [59697]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* No.

Clearskies Programme

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cut-off date was for *(a)* household and *(b)* community applications for the Clearskies Programme. [60061]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The last round for community applications closed on Friday 4 November 2005. Industry and key stakeholders were consulted about this.

Applications for householders closed on Friday 3 March 2006, a period of notice about the closure was given on the programme website.

The new low carbon buildings programme will supersede Clearskies in April this year, and will continue to make grants available for the installation of renewable technologies.

Domestic Energy

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what programmes have been announced by the six major domestic energy supply companies to protect vulnerable customers from the impact of rising energy prices; and how many customers have been signed up for such programmes. [60300]

Malcolm Wicks: Each of the major domestic energy suppliers offer a number of programmes that assist vulnerable customers in various ways. Although information from individual suppliers about take-up of particular schemes is commercially confidential, an annex to the Government's "UK Fuel Poverty Strategy Fourth Annual Progress Report", to be published late this year, will include information about the overall impacts of company schemes in 2004 and 2005.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment he has made of the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills by those households earning *(a)* the minimum wage, *(b)* between the minimum wage and average income and *(c)* above average income in the last period for which figures are available; what assessment he has made of the likely effect on those figures of gas price increases planned in March; and if he will make a statement; [58720]

(2) what estimate he has made of the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills by those in the *(a)* bottom 20 per cent. and *(b)* top 20 per cent. of earners in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Scotland; and if he will make a statement; [58746]

(3) what proportion of household disposable income was spent on energy bills in households in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [58762]

(4) what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of household disposable income that will be spent on energy bills for households in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland after the gas price increases announced by energy companies in March 2006 come into effect; and if he will make a statement; [58763]

(5) what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of household disposable income that will be spent on energy bills by *(a)* the bottom 20 per cent. of earners and *(b)* the top 20 per cent. of earners in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Scotland after the gas price increases announced by energy companies in March 2006 come into effect; and if he will make a statement. [58767]

Malcolm Wicks: Data on the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills is available from the Expenditure and Food Survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics. The most recent data containing full income information corresponds to 2003–04.

It is not possible to make an assessment of the impact of these increases on households earning the minimum wage, due to the different working patterns of those individuals within this group. We do, however, have data on the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills by quintile and country for 2003–04 and overall by country, which is shown in the table. The proportion of income spent by the middle quintile may be thought of as a measure of average proportional spend:

	Bottom 20 per cent. of incomes	*Middle 20 per cent. of incomes*	*Top 20 per cent. of incomes*	*All households*
Great Britain	5.9	2.9	1.6	2.6
England	5.8	2.8	1.5	2.5
Scotland	5.5	3.1	2.2	3.0
Wales	5.9	3.6	1.8	3.1

It is not possible to work out the impact of recent energy price rises on these statistics. These price increases are likely to have increased the proportion of income spent on fuel, though. Work on the best way to tackle the impact of the price rises for those in fuel poverty in the light of rising energy prices is being taken forward in the context of the Energy Review.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the proportion of household disposable income spent by pensioner households in receipt of pension credit on energy bills in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available; what assessment he has made of the likely effect of proposed increases to gas prices in March 2006 on the proportion of such income spent on energy bills; and if he will make a statement. [58747]

Malcolm Wicks: Data on the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills is available from the Expenditure and Food Survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics. The most recent data containing full income information corresponds to 2003–04.

This data shows that the proportion of disposable household income spent by pensioner households in receipt of pension credit in 2003–04 on energy bills in Great Britain is 4.5 per cent. It is not possible to break this figure down further by country because of small sample sizes. Given that the pension credit was only introduced towards the end of this survey period (in October 2003), this statistic should be treated with caution, as the profile of recipients may have changed since the period immediately following the introduction of the benefit.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what forecast his Department has made of the average annual energy bill per household in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* England and *(c)* Scotland after the gas price increases announced by energy companies in March 2006 came into effect; and if he will make a statement. [58761]

Malcolm Wicks: Following the price increases announced by some energy suppliers in February and March 2006, energywatch have estimated the typical standard credit energy bill in Great Britain will be £539 for gas and £349 for electricity, giving a total bill of £888. Separate data for Wales, England and Scotland is not available.

Actual bills will be affected by a number of factors, including the number of customers switching supplier and/or payment methods, and future tariff changes from the energy suppliers.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate he has made of the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills by those in receipt of benefits in Wales in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [58768]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of household disposable income that will be spent on energy bills by those in receipt of benefits in Wales after the gas price increases announced by energy companies in March 2006 come into effect; and if he will make a statement. [58769]

Malcolm Wicks: Data on the proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills is available from the Expenditure and Food Survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics. The most recent data containing full income information corresponds to 2003–04.

The proportion of household disposable income spent on energy bills by those in receipt of income-related benefits in Wales represented 4.0 per cent.

It is not possible to work out the impact of recent energy price rises on this statistic. These price increases are likely to have increased the proportion of income spent on fuel, though. Work on the best way to tackle the impact of the price rises for those in fuel poverty in the light of rising energy prices is being taken forward in the context of the Energy Review.

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the cost to UK consumers of the pace of energy market liberalisation in Europe; and if he will make a statement. [57835]

Malcolm Wicks: UK energy prices are influenced by a number of complex, inter-related factors and it is not possible to quantify precisely the impact of EU liberalisation. However we estimate that a properly functioning competitive EU gas market could have saved UK consumers in the order of £5 billion in the calendar year 2005 alone.

Significant obstacles to the development of a single energy market remain and we welcome the reviews the Commission is currently undertaking into the functioning of the sector.

While final conclusions are not due until the end of the year, the Commission recently reported in its sectoral inquiry of energy that it has already identified a number of areas of concern, including concentration and announced that it would launch anti-trust investigations shortly.

When the Commission's reviews are completed, we expect it to propose measures that will enable the rapid development of a functioning internal market.

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many gas and electricity suppliers have ceased trading since September 2005; how many domestic and commercial sites each supplied at the point at which they ceased trading; what assessment he has made of the impact of these closures on retail market competition; and if he will make a statement. [57834]

Malcolm Wicks: Since September 2005 Ofgem has revoked the supply licence and appointed a Supplier of Last Resort for five companies, these are summarised as follows:

Company	*Appointed SoLR*	*Date of Appointment*	*Fuel*	*Non-domestic Supply points*	*Domestic Supply points*
The Team Group of Companies	npower	2 December 2005	Gas	233	14
The Team Group of Companies	npower	2 December 2005	Electricity	975	20
Eledor Limited	npower	19 December 2005	Gas	499	0
Reepham	British Gas	20 December 2005	Electricity	244	0
Utility Link	London Energy	19 January 2006	Electricity	4,433	12,066
Zest 4	British Gas	4 February 2006	Electricity	0	8,444
Total				14,828	12,100

The total number of customers affected is very small compared to the size of the retail market (over 46m supply points). Based on current evidence, Ofgem does not believe that the exit of the firms listed in the table has undermined the health of retail competition.

Madagascar

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value of the UK's *(a)* trade with and *(b)* investment in Madagascar was in the last year for which figures are available. [58911]

Ian Pearson: The information requested is as follows:

(a) UK exports to Madagascar in 2005 were £6.58 million; UK imports from Madagascar in 2005 were £15.47 million.

(b) The level of UK investment in Madagascar is not disclosable as a single UK company's investment accounts for almost the total amount.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what timetables have been agreed with each foreign customer for Sellafield reprocessing facilities for the return to countries of origin of the reprocessed uranium arising from treatment of spent nuclear fuel; and what role the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will play in organising the return of such material. [56896]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* There is an active programme of exports in place to return reprocessed uranium to customers. This results in a number of shipments each year being dispatched from Sellafield.

Some customers choose to make use of the interim storage service that British Nuclear Group currently offer. Where this option is chosen the uranium is stored along with the UK uranium stockpile which has resulted from the reprocessing of UK fuel through Magnox and THORP. Revenue from these contracts off-sets the cost of storing the UK materials.

In all but a small number of early overseas reprocessing contracts the uranium arising from reprocessing is owned by the customer. The current NDA draft strategy is that all uranium owned by overseas customers will be returned within 10 years.

Operating and Financial Reviews

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of *(a)* the effect of the decision to abolish mandatory operating and financial reviews (OFRs) on investor confidence and *(b)* the extent to which OFRs encourage investment in the shares of UK companies. [60629]

Alun Michael: Following the repeal of the mandatory requirement for an operating and financial review, the Government invited views on narrative business reporting requirements for the future, with a closing date for responses of 24 March. This consultation provides an opportunity for all interested parties, including companies and investors, to express their views on all options and relevant issues. The Government will announce its conclusions following the consultation in due course and bring forward amendments as appropriate in the Company Law Reform Bill currently before Parliament.

Sellafield

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made with plans to dismantle the chimney-top filter of the Windscale I military reactor at Sellafield; and if he will make a statement. [59399]

Malcolm Wicks: We have been informed by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority that to date the following work has been completed with respect to the dismantling of the Pile 1 chimney at Sellafield (B6):

Decontamination of the Filter Gallery, removal of filters, removals of lining material from the Filter/Diffuser section, and removal of insulation from the Concentrator section at the top of the chimney.

Access has been created to the base of the chimney and lining material has been removed from the base and the main shaft. Decommissioning equipment (including Head Gear Platform, remote handling equipment, and access equipment) has been installed.

Work on the chimney demolition is scheduled to continue until September 2015, at which point the stack on Pile 1 will have been taken down to the same level as the Pile 2 chimney, which is 5 metres above the main Pile cap. The dismantling of the upper filter sections of the chimney will be complete by 2012.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59275]

Alun Michael: The DTI uses definitions based on the European Commission Recommendation 6 May 2003 and the Companies Act 1985.

The European Commission definition is based on headcount, turnover, balance sheet and independence criteria. A small firm is defined as having:

Maximum headcount of 49 (employees and self-employed)

Maximum annual turnover of €10 million (euros)

Maximum annual balance sheet total of €10 million (euros)

Maximum percentage owned by one or jointly owned by several enterprises not satisfying the same criteria 25 per cent.

Use of the European Commission definition is voluntary and the UK has not implemented the EU definition for its own activities on a blanket basis. Further information on the European Commission definition can be found here:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm

The Companies Act 1985 only defines small firms for the purpose of certain exemptions from accounting and auditing requirements and is not applied universally. The definitions in the Companies Act 1985 are themselves set to the maximum allowed under European law. Amendments to the Companies Act 1985 came into force on 30 January 2004 and state that a company is 'small' if it satisfies at least two of the following criteria:

A turnover of not more than £5.6 million

A balance sheet total of not more than £2.8 million

Not more than 50 employees

Further information on the Companies Act 1985 definition can be found here:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/audit.htm

In addition, there may be other occasions where an alternative definition of a small firm may be appropriate. For example, the DTI's "Small Firms Loan Guarantee" is open to young firms with a turnover up to £5.6 million to concentrate on those most likely to experience difficulties raising debt finance and to simplify eligibility criteria.

The DTI definition of a small firm for official statistics publications, such as the SME Statistics for the UK, is a business having between 0 and 49 employees. DTI figures on the number of businesses by size are available at www.sbs.gov.uk/smes

Trade (Israel and Palestine)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to increase trade between the UK and *(a)* Israel and *(b)* the Palestinian territories. [57991]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) provides a broad range of support services to British companies wishing to trade with or invest in Israel and the Palestinian territories, through commercial teams based in the UK and in both the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Consulate General in Jerusalem.

UKTI support in Israel focuses, in particular, on business opportunities in high technology sectors, including Biotechnology, Information and Communication Technology, the Environmental Industries and Financial and Legal Services. Recent Initiatives in the Palestinian territories have focused on the Education and Training sector, Infrastructure and Aid-funded business. UKTI funded a scoping mission to the West Bank and Gaza by the British Consultants and Construction Bureau in July 2005 and Palestinian participation in Education and Construction trade fairs in September and November 2005.

UKTI services to all markets are available through the UKTI Portal: www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Trade Balance

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with which countries the UK experienced a trade balance deterioration over the last three years. [58642]

Ian Pearson: The most up-to-date trade statistics available are in The Pink Book 2005, published by the Office for National Statistics. According to this, the countries with which the UK experienced a trade balance deterioration (for goods and services) in each of the two most recent years (2003 and 2004) are:

Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Norway, Romania, Turkey, Brazil, Venezuela, other Central American countries, China, Israel, Singapore and South Africa.

The countries with which the UK experienced a trade balance improvement (for goods and services) in each of the two most recent years (2003 and 2004) are:

Finland, France, Ireland, Switzerland, Argentina, United States of America, other Near & Middle Eastern Countries, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

It should be noted that the list of countries in The Pink Book in not exhaustive.

Data for 2005 will be available in The Pink Book 2006, due summer 2006.

Wind Farms

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what resources his Department is allocating to the review of section 36 consents for large offshore wind farms. [59757]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department's Electricity Development Consents Directorate has two dedicated case officers dealing with section 36 consents for renewable energy projects, including wind farms. Other staff also contribute toward section 36 work.

In assessing the applications, the EDC team can draw upon expert advice from their colleagues in the Department's Offshore Environment and Decommissioning Directorate. Advice is also provided by a range of consultees, including statutory bodies such as English Nature, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. DTI works closely with Defra and the Crown Estate who have related responsibilities for offshore wind farms.

The Department has established a Research Advisory Group (RAG), which brings together representatives from a number of Government Departments to co-ordinate the priorities for research work into the potential impact of offshore renewables projects. The results of this work will be available to Ministers in considering requests for consent from wind farm developers. The research is funded from a £2.5 million budget held by the DTI, but this money is supplemented by contributions from other parties, for example, other Government Departments and the wind farm industry.

DTI also facilitates a number of stakeholder groups which bring together the offshore renewable energy sector with environmental, navigation and fishing interests. These groups exist to consider how wind farms can be successfully integrated into the marine environment and provide evidence and analysis relevant to consent decisions.

World Trade Organisation (Emergency Summit)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of *(a)* the outcome of the recent emergency summit of the World Trade Organisation in London and *(b)* its likely implications for developing countries. [58851]

Ian Pearson: Talks at the G6 Ministers (EU, US, Brazil, India, Australia and Japan) meeting in London on 11 March were intense, but unfortunately delivered no major progress. As reflected in my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's joint statement with President Lula, the UK remains committed to an ambitious, balanced, pro-development outcome to the round. We believe that all the main parties in the talks need to take bold steps to go beyond established negotiating positions to improve their offers on agricultural market access and domestic support, NAMA and services. Those offers must also take account of the needs of developing countries by delivering improved market access in both agricultural and non-agricultural goods that is comparably high, but in a balanced and proportionate manner, consistent with the principle of special and differential treatment.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether any contaminated land has been designated in the footprint of the area assigned to the 2012 London Olympics. [59672]

Mr. Caborn: Initial site investigation and desk-top research work, undertaken in support of the Olympic and Legacy Planning Applications, identified some contamination within the footprint of the Olympic Park area. Much of the contaminated land is former Brownfield or derelict land that has been used for a variety of industrial activities. The appropriate decontamination work will take place before development of the site commences.

Libraries

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many libraries there are in England; and how many there were in 1997. [60518]

Mr. Lammy: The number of static public libraries in England 1997–98 and 2004–05 (most recently available figures) was as follows:

Static Libraries in England

	Hours per week					
	60+	*45–59*	*30–44*	*10–29*	*<10*	*Total*
1997–98	6	449	1,278	1,323	157	3213
2004–05	69	727	1,139	1,106	96	3137

Sources:

Public Library Statistics 2004–05 Actuals, published by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) & LISU Annual Library Statistics 2005 (derived from CIPFA Actuals figures 1997–98 to 2004–05).

Local News Services

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the BBC's proposed ultra-local digital news services on local television stations. [59545]

James Purnell: This is primarily a matter for the BBC. The White Paper we published on 14 March 2006 makes clear that, under the new Charter and Agreement, any proposed new service or significant change to an existing service will need to be subjected to a Public Value Test (PVT), which will include an assessment of impact on the market. We welcome the BBC's commitment to ensuring that the proposal for local news services undergoes a PVT before a decision is made on whether to roll them out.

Prejudice and Intolerance Campaigns

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what departmental assistance has been offered to Glasgow Rangers and Glasgow Celtic football clubs to help in their campaigns against prejudice and intolerance in the last two years. [59831]

Mr. Caborn: As you may know, sport is a devolved matter and the Scottish Executive, rather than the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, has responsibility for professional football in Scotland.

However, I am pleased to hear that that the Scottish Football Association (SFA) has recently introduced a National Club Licensing Scheme which places a responsibility on Scottish Premier League (SPL) and Scottish Football League (SFL) clubs to demonstrate they operate clear policies against sectarianism. Sportscotland also actively promotes ethical participation in sport and has produced an Ethics in Sport document providing basic information for sports organisations on ethical issues with a specific section covering faith, religion and sport.

My Department continues to support anti-racism campaigns such as Kick It Out and Show Racism the Red Card through funding for the Football Foundation which will receive £45 million in Government money between 2004 and 2007. We are also working closely with the Commission for Racial Equality who are developing race equality action plans with the Football Association, the Premier League, the Football League, the Professional Footballers Association and the Football Foundation.

CABINET OFFICE

Ministerial Code

22. **Mr. Hands:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent representations he has received on the ministerial code; and if he will make a statement. [59771]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The 'ministerial code' is normally revised and reissued after a general election. The current version was reissued in July 2005. It took account of comments made by the Public Administration Select Committee and the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Delivery Unit

23. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the work of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit. [59772]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit aims to ensure the delivery of the Government's top public service priority outcomes. The unit works in partnership with Government Departments to deliver improvements in public services.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the work of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit. [59773]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit aims to ensure the delivery of the Government's top public service priority outcomes. The unit works in partnership with Government Departments to deliver improvements in public services.

Civil Service

24. **Vera Baird:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on progress in increasing the number of women in the senior civil service. [59774]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The proportion of women in senior posts since 1998 has increased significantly. The civil service has met its target to double the proportion of women in top management posts (from 12.7 per cent. to 25.5 per cent. in 2005), but there is still more work to do. New and challenging targets have been set for 2008, underpinned by a Diversity 10 Point Plan; "Delivering Diverse Civil Service".

Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he will publish in full the responses to the consultation on the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill. [58722]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Responses to the consultation document, "A Bill for Better Regulation", were published on the Better Regulation Executive website on 6 March 2006. Copies of the consultation responses, with the exception of the consultees who requested that their responses be kept confidential, can be found at:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/bill/consultation_responses.asp

Copies have also been placed in the Library.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A26

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average number of vehicles per day using the A26 between the Lodge Road roundabout, Coleraine and the exit to Ballymena was in the last period for which figures are available. [59524]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin dated 21 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what the average number of vehicles per day using the A26 between the Lodge Road roundabout, Coleraine and the exit to Ballymena was in the last period for which figures are available.

As this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service, I have been asked to reply.

By way of background, I should explain that Roads Service collects traffic volume data by means of 270 automatic census points strategically located throughout the Northern Ireland road network. The information is recorded for one week in each quarter during the year and an annual average calculated. The results are published in Roads Service's annual Traffic and Travel Information Report, which presents the traffic volumes in a variety of formats for each site.

The latest data on the average daily number of vehicles using the A26 between Coleraine and Ballymena is shown in the table below.

Location	*Average daily flow*
A26 Ballymena to Ballymoney—north of M2	19,220
A26 Ballymena to Ballymoney—south-east of Ballymoney	14,430
A26 Ballymoney bypass	16,590
A26 south-east of Coleraine ring road	15,770

I hope this information is helpful.

Civil Service (Meetings)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 362W, on civil service (meetings), on how many occasions the head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service has met in the last three years *(a)* the Presbyterian Church, *(b)* the Roman Catholic Church, *(c)* the Church of Ireland, *(d)* the Methodist Church, *(e)* the Baptist Union of Ireland, *(f)* the Free Presbyterian Church, *(g)* the Elim Pentecostal Church, *(h)* the Reformed Presbyterian Church, *(i)* the Congregational Union of Ireland, *(j)* the Evangelical Alliance, *(k)* ECONI and *(l)* the Caleb Foundation. [58282]

Angela E. Smith: The current Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service has formally met with representatives of the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church on four occasions during 2005 and 2006 at a forum established at the request of those Churches. He has met with the Director of ECONI twice at his request. He also has had a wide range of meetings on specific projects and issues with individuals who would be members of these denominations but were not representing those denominations, almost always at their request. He will be happy to meet with any of the bodies listed, if asked by them.

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) which statutory bodies in Northern Ireland are responsible for dealing with the consequences of coastal erosion; [59608]

(2) what statutory bodies in Northern Ireland are responsible for dealing with the consequences of coastal erosion. [59877]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland does not have any legislation specifically related to coastal erosion. Essential works within the sphere of interest of various Government Departments continue to be dealt with under the Bateman Formula.

The Bateman Formula is a historic inter-departmental agreement detailing the procedure for executing essential coastal protection works. Within this formula cost beneficial works, to protect essential infrastructure may be undertaken by the Department or Authority responsible for the asset at risk. DARD Rivers Agency undertakes essential cost beneficial works that do not fall within the functional area of other Departments or Agencies.

Concessionary Travel

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many senior citizens have taken up the offer of free travel on public transport in Northern Ireland since its inception. [59521]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has provided the following figures detailing the number of new Senior SmartPasses issued since their introduction in May 2002 and the number used at least once.

Number of Senior SmartPasses issued: 192,197

Number of Senior SmartPasses used at least once: 186,530

Cruelty to Animals

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many animals have had to be destroyed in Northern Ireland following acts of cruelty in each of the last five years. [57907]

Angela E. Smith: The Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 allows an Officer of the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) to have an animal slaughtered without the permission of the owner, provided a veterinary surgeon certifies that it is so diseased or severely injured, or in such a physical condition, that it would be cruel to keep it alive. The PSNI does not retain statistical information on the number of animals destroyed.

Records from 2001 to 2005 kept in respect of farm animals slaughtered by, or involving, officials from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are detailed as follows. This information does not differentiate between animals that were destroyed as a result of cruelty and those that were destroyed in order to avoid unnecessary suffering.

Animals destroyed by DARD in Northern Ireland under the Welfare of Animals (Northern Ireland) Act 1972

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Cattle	132	16	26	29	32
Sheep	405	162	120	17	27
Pigs	—	2	—	1	1
Total	[1]537	180	146	47	60

[1] This figure includes animals that were destroyed during the foot and mouth disease outbreak when animal welfare issues arose as a result of movement restrictions and difficulties in getting feed to animals

Electoral Register

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the adult population in Northern Ireland entitled to be on the electoral register is on that register. [57966]

Mr. Hanson: The percentage of the adult population in Northern Ireland entitled to be on the electoral register is estimated to be 91.1 per cent. This is based on the projected voting age population mid-year estimate for 2004 of 1,272,838. The 1 March 2006 register has a total of 1,159,858 electors.

Employment Statistics

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of people who began self-employment in each Northern Ireland constituency in 2005. [59820]

Mr. Hanson: Estimates from the autumn 2005 labour force survey (LFS) show that of the 122,000 self-employed persons in Northern Ireland, 6,000[1] had commenced their business in 2005. It is not possible to provide such estimates at constituency area level from the LFS.

However for information, the following table details the number of offers of assistance provided through the Northern Ireland Start a Business Programme in each parliamentary constituency area during the calendar year 2005.

[1] This estimate is based on a small sample size and is therefore subject to a higher than usual degree of sampling variability. It should therefore be treated with caution.

Parliamentary constituency area	*Offers of assistance*
Belfast East	94
Belfast North	104
Belfast South	136
Belfast West	105
East Antrim	166
East Londonderry	205
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	281
Foyle	301
Lagan Valley	181
Mid Ulster	299
Newry and Armagh	212
North Antrim	197
North Down	137
South Antrim	147
South Down	273
Strangford	180
Upper Bann	225
West Tyrone	183
Total	3,426

Festivals

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public money has been made available to support the *(a)* West Belfast Festival and *(b)* Belfast Saint Patrick's Day Parade and festival in each year since its inception. [53148]

Mr. Hanson: Details of the public monies made available to support the *(a)* West Belfast Festival and *(b)* Belfast Saint Patrick's Day Parade and festival are given in the following table.

£

Financial year	*West Belfast Festival*	*St Patrick's Carnival*
1994–95	1,685	—
1995–96	600	—
1996–97	89,000	—
1997–98	27,000	—
1998–99	29,229.98	—
1999–2000	47,630	32,720
2000–01	80,933	2,000
2001–02	290,330.41	2,000
2002–03	249,224.26	7,000
2003–04	382,221.15	8,900
2004–05	360,037.95	—
2005–06	253,417	—
Total awarded	1,811,308.75	52,620

This information may not be complete for the following reasons:

(a) Departments have no records of financial assistance awarded to the West Belfast Festival prior to the 1994–95 financial year.

(b) Departments have no records of financial assistance awarded to the St. Patrick's Day Parade and festival prior to the 1999–2000 financial year.

(c) The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has no records of financial assistance awarded to events prior to 1998–99.

Home Information Packs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government intend to introduce home information packs in Northern Ireland. [59179]

Mr. Hanson: The future direction as regards the introduction of home information packs will be determined as part of a major project to review current land law and conveyance legislation and practice in Northern Ireland which is due to commence in April 2006.

Housing

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 370W, on housing, what the total unpaid Housing Executive rent was in each district in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years; and what steps are being taken to recover outstanding amounts. [58280]

Mr. Hanson: The total of unpaid Housing Executive rent in each district in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years from 1996 to 2005 is detailed in the following table.

The Housing Executive inform me that the steps taken to recover outstanding amounts include a range of debt counselling/prevention procedures including arrangements through the Citizen's Advice Bureau. £11.5 million of debt is being recovered through voluntary and statutory means (including attachment to earnings and recovery from state benefits). On average NIHE recover possession of 150 properties through court action on grounds of rent arrears each year.

Total NIHE rent/rates debt[1]

£000

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Belfast 1	559	525	514	558	570	662	739	687	644	593
Belfast 2	510	487	472	565	588	935	980	1,001	935	855
Belfast 3	549	563	527	529	546	579	584	538	514	476
Belfast 4	596	560	596	699	675	983	1,036	986	1,063	993
Belfast 5	508	499	476	507	547	744	887	995	1,046	1,027
Belfast 6	481	477	456	465	499	622	618	592	647	591
Belfast 7	689	662	675	658	697	877	905	906	972	926
Bangor	305	312	328	387	444	601	710	819	795	733
Newtownards	419	391	460	556	662	740	810	901	937	721
Castlereagh	544	559	550	590	641	796	852	864	930	867
Lisburn	505	460	448	541	676	891	1,069	1,020	1,006	955
Lisburn 3	465	440	430	413	430	430	435	420	468	408
Downpatrick	447	444	481	461	461	529	547	534	545	473
Banbridge	221	255	242	242	312	381	381	366	364	354
Newry	362	383	363	343	370	448	475	473	451	415
Armagh	244	253	227	218	251	268	324	307	276	232
Lurgan/B'low	338	311	278	276	273	345	360	341	357	361
Portadown	134	141	125	168	181	230	278	290	343	335
Dungannon	156	166	153	145	204	249	313	351	336	312
Fermanagh	124	143	134	168	205	235	255	239	264	262
Ballymena	222	297	264	264	292	282	320	328	316	304
Antrim	379	412	391	392	424	431	452	402	367	334
N'abbey 1	329	298	277	329	337	350	440	402	381	366
N'abbey 2	480	394	407	446	474	472	525	452	391	354
C'fergus	365	351	323	388	408	366	377	337	340	286
Larne	272	228	239	267	292	325	343	327	304	248
Ballycastle	95	97	89	91	89	83	88	84	92	86
Ballymoney	129	124	124	140	158	144	145	144	171	158
Coleraine	338	334	344	386	438	459	535	517	517	467

Total NIHE rent/rates debt[1]

£000

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Waterloo Pl	317	288	271	259	267	330	341	319	286	252
Waterside	535	535	506	517	613	751	827	819	788	768
Collon Tee	407	388	360	345	370	470	530	585	575	513
Limavady	222	228	218	236	280	307	327	306	317	302
Magherafelt	116	152	135	162	170	208	235	267	305	251
Strabane	336	334	314	328	404	471	564	520	543	488
Omagh	206	196	174	186	200	201	255	294	322	277
Cookstown	105	108	115	142	152	164	176	154	173	166
Total	12,985	12,793	12,491	13,364	14,596	17,358	19,027	18,888	19,081	[2]17,512

[1] The figures quoted are at the end of the financial year i.e. 31 March and include debt from previous years.

[2] This figure was previously quoted as 17,751 which included an amount of unrecoverable debt which has since been written off.

Note:

The figures quoted in the totals, which are correct, do not match the total of each of the columns due to these amounts being rounded to three figures.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new applications for mobile telephone masts are in the planning system in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* each council area in Northern Ireland. [59473]

Angela E. Smith: There are a total of 46 current telecommunication applications in the planning system in Northern Ireland.

Details of the number of current telecommunication applications in each council area are provided in the following table.

Please note that these figures refer to applications to construct or add to existing telecommunication masts.

Council area	*Number of applications*
Antrim	2
Ards	2
Armagh	0
Ballymena	0
Ballymoney	1
Banbridge	0
Belfast	1
Carrickfergus	1
Castlereagh	0
Coleraine	2
Cookstown	0
Craigavon	7
Derry	9
Down	4
Dungannon	1
Fermanagh	2
Larne	0
Limavady	0
Lisburn	0
Magherafelt	0
Moyle	0
Newry and Mourne	6
Newtownabbey	2
North Down	2
Omagh	4
Strabane	0

Non-departmental Public Bodies (Political Allegiance)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the last 50 people appointed to non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland for whom a party political allegiance was ascertained were allied to each party. [57975]

Angela E. Smith: Those appointed to the boards of non-departmental public bodies are not required to declare their political allegiance. However, they are asked to declare any significant political activity they may have undertaken in the five years prior to the date of their application. Information on the declared political activity of applicants and appointees to bodies sponsored by Northern Ireland's 11 government departments can be found in the Public Appointments Annual Report, and similar details in respect of NIO sponsored bodies is included in the NIO Departmental Report. Copies of the latest versions of both these reports are available from the Library of the House and can be found on the internet at www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/public-appointments and www.nio.gov.uk/departmental_report_2005.pdf respectively.

As at 10 March 2006, the political affiliation of the last 51[1] individuals put forward for appointment to non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland as elected representatives is as follows:

[1] As several elected representatives were appointed on the same date, it is not possible to list the exact last 50 appointments.

	Number
Alliance	4
DUP	14
SDLP	12
Sinn Fein	8
UUP	11
Others	2
Total	51

Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases the Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman has investigated in each of the last three years; and in what percentage of cases there was a finding in favour of the complainant in each year. [56355]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the Northern Ireland Ombudsman has written to the hon. Gentleman. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library.

Public Appointments

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people appointed to non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland had their membership of such bodies suspended or terminated between 2000 and 2005. [56142]

Angela E. Smith: In the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2005, 12 individuals had their appointment to non-departmental public bodies terminated. There were no suspensions of appointment in this period.

Secondary Schools (East Londonderry)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many secondary schools in the East Londonderry constituency are based in premises over 50-years-old; [59606]

(2) how many secondary schools in East Londonderry constituency are based in premises over 50-years-old. [59875]

Angela E. Smith: There are four secondary schools in the East Londonderry constituency that are based in premises over 50-years-old. These are:

Garvagh high school;

Coleraine academical institution;

Loreto college, Coleraine; and

Dominician college, Portstewart.

Sexual Assaults

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many sexual assaults have been reported in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency; and how many convictions there were for such assaults in each year, in each constituency. [59472]

Mr. Woodward: Reporting data in respect of sexual assaults is only available by District Command Unit. Statistics in relation to this type of offence are available on the PSNI website: www.psni.police.uk The following table provides statistics on the number of convictions for sexual assaults by District Command Unit during the period 2000 to 2003 (2003 being the most up-to-date data currently available). Data for 1999 has not been included as it is not comparable with the 2000–03 data.

Table 1: Convictions for sexual assaults by District Command Unit 2000–03

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Antrim	2	0	3	1
Ards	6	0	2	2
Armagh	3	2	2	0
Banbridge	2	0	0	1
Belfast East	3	4	1	3
Belfast North	6	6	5	5
Belfast South	7	10	6	7
Belfast West	4	3	0	3
Ballymena	0	2	1	2
Ballymoney	3	1	0	2
Carrickfergus	3	3	0	0
Coleraine	3	4	0	0
Cookstown	2	0	0	0
Craigavon	3	3	2	5
Castlereagh	1	3	2	1
Dungannon and South Tyrone	4	1	0	2
Down	4	2	3	1
Fermanagh	7	1	3	3
Foyle	9	8	4	4
Larne	0	0	1	2
Limavady	1	0	2	2
Lisburn	3	9	2	6
Magherafelt	0	0	3	1
Moyle	1	1	0	0
Newtownabbey	1	3	2	2
North Down	1	4	2	1
Newry and Mourne	5	1	0	2
Omagh	0	2	3	3
Strabane	1	0	3	1
Missing	4	8	3	4
Total	89	81	55	66

Notes:

1. Table 1 is based on the PSNI District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls. The structure of police District Command Units became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division. It is not possible to disaggregate data by DCU for 1999.

2. Figures include convictions for the offences of "assault with intent to rape", "indecent assault on female", "indecent assault on male", "indecent assault on female child" and "indecent assault on male child".

3. "Missing" data includes those convictions for which DCU information is not available.

4. Data is collated on the principal offence rule, thus only the most serious offence for which an offender is charged is included.

5. At present there is no means of tracking an offence from when it was reported to the police to whether there was a conviction for the offence, thus the conviction figures included should not be compared with the number of sexual assaults reported.

Shootings and Assaults

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the level of *(a)* Loyalist and *(b)* Republican shootings and assaults; and if he will make a statement. [58321]

Mr. Woodward: PSNI statistics are as follows:

	2006[1]			*2005*[1]		
	Loyalist	*Republican*	*Total*	*Loyalist*	*Republican*	*Total*
Shootings	10	—	10	12	5	17
Assaults	7	4	11	13	10	23
Total	17	4	21	25	15	40

[1] 12 March.

Paramilitary style shootings and attacks continue on a downward trend.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59278]

Mr. Hanson: The precision with which terms such as 'small firm' and 'SME' (small and medium-sized enterprise) are used by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) depend on the context. There is no single definition of a small firm. Definitions commonly used are those of the European Union (EU) and the Companies Act 1985. The EU defines a small firm as one with:

Maximum headcount of 49 (employees and self-employed)

Maximum annual turnover of €10 million

Maximum annual balance sheet total of €10 million

Maximum percentage owned by one or jointly owned by several enterprises not satisfying the same criteria 25 per cent.

The Companies Act 1985 states that a company is 'small' if it satisfies at least two of the following criteria:

A turnover of not more than £5.6 million

A balance sheet total of not more than £2.8 million

Not more than 50 employees

Special Needs Provision

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils in *(a)* schools and *(b)* special needs education in Northern Ireland are assessed as (i) partially-sighted and (ii) totally blind. [60611]

Angela E. Smith: In the 2005–06 school census return, there were 60 pupils with special educational needs who were recorded as blind. Of these, 40 were in special schools.

There were 542 children with special educational needs recorded as partially sighted. Of these, 203 were in special schools.

Ulster Scots Culture

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will establish a liaison group of education authorities in Northern Ireland to pursue with their counterparts in Scotland the promotion and understanding of the Ulster-Scots cultural outlook. [59520]

Mr. Hanson: Government have no plans to establish such a liaison group. It believes that the Ulster Scots Agency is well placed to pursue the promotion and understanding of Ulster-Scots culture in Northern Ireland.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic Year

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a publicly-funded further education provider has discretion to set the length of an academic year. [58912]

Bill Rammell: Further education (FE) colleges are independent institutions incorporated under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and, as such, are themselves responsible for setting the dates for their terms and academic year. However, in practice, colleges align their academic year with the traditional academic year followed by schools and universities.

The funding and accounting year for FE colleges is set by the Learning and Skills Council at 1 August to 31 July, to coincide with the traditional academic year.

The length of the academic year may depend to some extent on the dates for the duration and completion of individual courses. However, this will depend on the requirements of the relevant qualification awarding bodies, on the types of qualification delivered and on the mode of delivery.

Colleges will, of course, also provide the courses which do not follow the pattern of a traditional academic year to meet the needs of employers and learners.

Bishop Wulstan Catholic School

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures the Bishop Wulstan Catholic School in Warwickshire is taking to raise its standards; and if she will make a statement. [59743]

Jacqui Smith: The Local Authority is in discussion with DfES officials about how best to improve educational outcomes for pupils at Bishop Wulstan School in both the short and medium term. However, discussions are still ongoing and no decisions have yet been taken.

Building Schools for the Future

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to reply to the letter of 8 February 2006 on building schools for the future in County Durham from the hon. Member for Easington. [55823]

Jacqui Smith: I responded to the hon. Member's letter on 13 March.

Bullying

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on her Department's plans to combat bullying in educational establishments. [59824]

Jacqui Smith: This Government have given an unprecedented high profile to tackling bullying and supporting those who have been bullied. Since 1999 it has been compulsory for every school to have an anti-bullying policy in place which details how the school will tackle bullying. Our anti-bullying work, including the anti-bullying Charter for Action, takes an integrated approach to preventing bullying, to addressing causes of bullying—for example prejudice—and to helping those who are bullied.

As recommended by the Practitioners Group on Behaviour and Discipline, the recent White Paper committed the Department to producing specific guidance for schools on prejudice driven bullying. At the beginning of this month, we launched our new advice 'Bullying around racism, religion and culture; how to prevent it and what to do when it happens' as the first of this suite of materials. The advice is presented as a set of interactive web pages on the teachernet website and is being supported by a national programme of dissemination events. Feedback from schools and local authorities so far has been overwhelmingly positive. We will be following this with specific advice on countering homophobic bullying later in 2006.

We have secured a very broad consensus, with all the teaching professional associations and the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) signing up to our Anti-Bullying Charter for Action. The Charter is a voluntary commitment to creating a school community where bullying is not tolerated. In 2006 we plan to share examples of where the Charter has been particularly well implemented with other schools so that they can learn from this best practice.

Through our work with the ABA, an organisation comprising over 65 leading anti-bullying charities and experts, we provide schools and local authorities with expert help to tackle bullying. The National Strategies' behaviour materials provide schools with support in reducing and responding to bullying.

We have put more adults than ever in our schools—teachers, classroom assistants, learning mentors, Connexions personal advisers, Behaviour and Education Support Teams and police officers—so that a wide range of people are available to help prevent and tackle bullying.

Anti-bullying week continues to be a successful event with a large number of schools taking part in November 2005's activities through a wide variety of national and local events. There was a considerable amount of positive press coverage and this year over 325,000 anti-bullying wristbands were distributed.

Our anti-bullying resource pack for schools "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", updated in 2000 and September 2002 will be revised and re-issued in the summer term 2006 to ensure schools have the most up-to-date information available on tackling bullying.

In addition the Department has recently launched the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum resource—an intervention to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills from Foundation Stage to Year 6. It is available to all primary schools and the evidence from the pilot suggests that it helps reduce bullying and promotes positive behaviour generally. It is an important arm of the Department's longer term policy to promote positive behaviour and attendance. The Department is hoping to build on the work carried out in primary schools by providing a similar whole school curriculum based resource for secondary schools (SEBS). At present the programme is in a very early pilot stage.

Communicable Diseases

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is taking to raise awareness of communicable diseases in higher education establishments, with particular reference to meningitis; how many students have (i) contracted and (ii) died of meningitis since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [59829]

Bill Rammell: This Department works in partnership with higher education sector bodies, such as Universities UK (UUK) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) to give guidance and raise awareness of particular issues that affect the sector.

In response to publicity and concerns about recurring cases of meningococcal disease at higher education institutions, UUK published revised guidance on managing the disease in July 2004. Organisations such as the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the Public Health Medicine Environment Group were involved in drawing up the guidance. The guidance helps institutions and health protection units prepare for meningitis or septicaemia and indicates the action they should take following a case or outbreak.

The HPA collects data on the number of cases and deaths from meningococcal disease in higher education students. UUK's guidance gives HPA figures from 1999 to 2002. These are set out in the following table:

	Number of cases of students with meningitis[1]	*Number of deaths of students from meningitis*[1]	
		Number	*Percentage*
1999	77	4	5.2
2000	60	5	8.3
2001	57	6	10.5
2002	54	4	7.4

[1] In higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Drinking Water (Schools)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the merits of installing water coolers in all schools to improve pupils' access to free, fresh drinking water during the school day; [60440]

(2) what steps she is taking to encourage water consumption by pupils during the school day. [60441]

Jacqui Smith: We are aware of the importance of children drinking water during the school day and the benefits that it brings. The interactive Food in Schools Toolkit, published jointly by the Department of Health and DfES, provides a wide range of guidance, resources and interactive tools to inspire and support schools in taking a whole school approach to healthy eating and drinking, including water provision. The 'Water Provision' guidance supports schools in reviewing and improving current provision and promoting water consumption.

The Cross Departmental "Healthy Living Blueprint", issued to all schools, brings together all government advice and examples of best practice about healthy eating and drinking in schools. It provides schools with advice on how to improve children's approach to food and drink and exercise, and shows how developing whole school approaches can help bring about significant improvements to the health of children.

Healthy School Lunches guidance, published by the DfES, contains the Secretary of State's expectation that drinking water should be available to all pupils every day, free of charge. This view is mirrored in the 'Healthy Living Blueprint for Schools', which states that,

> "all pupils should have access to drinking water at all times at a number of points around the school, preferably not from taps in the toilets. Pupils should be permitted to carry water with them and consumption encouraged both in class and during break and lunch time".

The School Meals Review Panel (SMRP) made a reference to drinking water in recommendation 7 of their report—Turning the Tables: "There should be easy access to free, fresh, chilled drinking water throughout the school day (paragraph 2.32)". The consultation closed on 31 December 2005 and the responses are being analysed.

It is the responsibility of head teachers and school's governing bodies to decide how and when water should be made available. We consider that they are best placed to make these decisions in their role of having responsibility of the day to day running of the school and with their knowledge of the individual circumstances of their pupils.

Education Act 2002

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools are a qualifying school for the purposes of chapter 2 of the Education Act 2002. [59325]

Jacqui Smith: The provisions set out in chapter 2 of the Education Act (2002) conferring exemptions related to school performance, have not yet been commenced. Regulations setting out which schools are "qualifying schools" have not been made. As such, no schools are "qualifying schools" for the purposes of these provisions. We are keeping the provisions under review.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to increase energy efficiency within her Department; and if she will make a statement. [60325]

Bill Rammell: The Department is taking the following steps to increase energy efficiency:

Energy Audits undertaken by the Carbon Trust on three buildings, findings to be presented to facilities managers during April;

Plant and machinery efficiency reviewed regularly by building engineers and remedial action taken where necessary;

Building Management Systems checked by building engineers to confirm equipment is operating effectively;

Window seals renewed at Moorfoot as part of a two year programme to reduce drafts;

Timer plugs installed on photocopiers at Moorfoot with the potential of extending to other sites and electrical equipment, depending on feasibility and funds. As an interim measure, photocopiers are switched off each night by Security Guards at Darlington;

Sensor lighting installed in Sanctuary Buildings' car parks and 8th floor and considering the feasibility of extending this further;

New software, called "NightWatchman", introduced from February 2006 to shutdown PCs automatically at a set time each evening;

Flat screen monitors installed which use less energy, at every workstation which doesn't have one already;

Multi Functional Devices being trialled which can print, scan and fax. If successful, they will be implemented throughout the Department.

Examination Boards

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned into the effects of competition on examination boards. [59503]

Jacqui Smith: The Secretary of State has not commissioned any research into the effects of competition on awarding bodies. Responsibility for regulating qualifications and ensuring standards are maintained in England lies with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The QCA keeps the qualifications system under review, and published in 2004 a study of the market for qualifications which looked at the structure of the marketplace and the drivers for change.

GCSE grades

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children in *(a)* Tameside and *(b)* Stockport local education authority achieved five or more GCSEs at (i) grade A*-C and (ii) grade A*-G in each year since 1997. [58011]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is presented in the following table.

GCSE and equivalent[1] achievements of 15-year-old pupils

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*[2]	*2005*[3,4]
(i) Percentage of 15-year-old pupils achieving 5 or more grades A-C*									
Stockport local authority[5]	50.2	50.2	50.1	51.7	54.2	52.4	53.3	53.0	54.4
Tameside local authority[5]	37.7	38.4	40.5	42.1	42.0	43.1	46.2	44.7	51.7
LA maintained total[5]	42.5	43.6	45.7	47.0	47.9	49.5	51.1	52.0	54.7
England (all schools)	45.1	46.3	47.9	49.2	50.0	51.6	52.9	53.7	56.3
(ii) Percentage of 15-year-old pupils achieving 5 or more grades A-G*									
Stockport local authority[5]	91.6	90.4	91.6	90.9	91.9	89.9	90.6	89.9	90.2
Tameside local authority[5]	86.2	89.2	90.5	90.9	90.5	89.3	90.0	89.6	90.5
LA maintained total[5]	87.0	88.0	89.3	89.6	89.6	89.6	89.4	89.7	89.9
England (all schools)	86.4	87.5	88.5	88.9	88.9	88.9	88.8	88.8	89.0

[1] From 1997, figures include results of GCSE and GNVQ qualifications.

[2] From 2004, figures include results of GCSE and all other equivalent qualifications approved for use pre-16.

[3] From 2005, figures also include results of graded exams.

[4] Figures for 2005 are revised; final figures will be published later in 2006.

[5] The figures for each LA, and the LA maintained total include LA maintained schools, CTCs and, from 2003, academies, England (all schools) figures include all schools.

Graduate Teacher Programme

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding her Department has provided to the Graduate Teacher Programme in each year since the programme's creation. [59513]

Jacqui Smith: The Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) is managed by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). The GTP was initially established on a small scale in 1998 but was expanded significantly in 2001. The TDA also manages three other smaller employment based initial teacher training schemes. These are the registered teacher, overseas-trained teacher, and teach first programmes. More than 90 per cent. of current TDA expenditure on employment based initial teacher training is incurred on the GTP.

The Department for Education and Skills funds the TDA. The TDA has discretion as to how it distributes these funds in support of its statutory functions. The following table shows the amount of funding for employment based initial teacher training included within total funding provided by the DfES to the TDA from 1998–99 onwards.

	£ million
1998–99	3.5
1999–2000	3.8
2000–01	10.5
2001–02	34.9
2002–03	40.9
2003–04	66.9
2004–05	76.9
2005–06	86.9

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what response her Department has made to the Ofsted report on the Graduate Teacher Programme; and if she will make a statement. [59514]

Jacqui Smith: I have asked officials to discuss the report's findings and recommendations with the Training and Development Agency for schools.

Learning and Skills Council

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support the Learning and Skills Council offers to adults who have held a level 2 qualification for more than 20 years and who wish to study for a new qualification at the same level but in a different subject area. [60263]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has an extensive range of support to meet the different types of learners' needs, this includes those who already hold a full level 2 qualification and would like to study at the same level. In 2006/07, unless the individual is within an exempt category, the assumed fee contribution of individuals will be 32.5 per cent. Consequently, the LSC will offer substantial financial support to repeat level 2 learners by funding 67.5 per cent. of the total cost of the tuition fees. Individuals can also benefit from access to discretionary learner support funds; this could include assistance with the costs of transport and child care. Also available is a commercial bank loan to support the costs of learning and there is access for all to information and advice through an integrated service. This includes information and advice through learndirect and through local nextstep services.

Those exempt from fees in further education are: 16–18-year-olds; unemployed people in receipt of jobseeker's allowance; those in receipt of income-based benefits; the unwaged dependants of those listed; and, asylum seekers in receipt of equivalent income-based benefit and their dependants.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what systems are in place in the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to ensure that national, regional and local plans are adjusted to take account of research findings about learning and skills commissioned by *(a)* the LSC and *(b)* other organisations. [60265]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for identifying national and local learning and skills needs, and for setting and implementing strategies and plans for meeting those needs. Good information on labour market and skills trends is essential for the council's work in steering post-16 education and skills provision. In developing its plans the LSC takes account of a wide range of information about current and future skill needs, including the national employer skills survey, research into learner and employer views of learning, and data contained in the Working Futures 2004 to 2014 reports, commissioned by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA). The LSC is also required to consult and take account of the plans of other organisations, including local authorities and the regional development agencies, and, at the national level, sector skills councils help to identify the skills that are needed for each sector.

Each year the LSC produces an annual statement of priorities. Plans are then formally reviewed throughout the year by the LSC's management group, and adjustments are made in the light of changing priorities if necessary. Changes to the LSC's internal organisation will further strengthen its research capacity, and ensure even more effective delivery against individual and employer needs at national, regional and local level.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what systems are in place to enable good practice in one Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area to be shared with other local LSCs outside their region. [60266]

Bill Rammell: Staff from local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) meet regularly to exchange and develop good practice and the LSC publishes a range of documents which contain best practice examples. Both the LSC's annual statement of priorities and annual report include examples of case studies illustrating what has worked well in local areas. All LSC documents can be accessed through the reading room on the LSC's website www.lsc.gov.uk

The LSC also works with existing provider networks and the Association of Colleges and the Association of Learning Providers to help share best practice through their members.

In addition, the LSC manages and funds the Skills and Enterprise Network website (www.senet.lsc.gov.uk). This has over 8,000 members, representing a very broad range of institutions, including the LSC national and local offices, universities, colleges, training providers, national and local government, policy organisations, local authorities, schools and research institutions. The aim of the newsletter and web pages is to provide easy access to up-to-date information on education, training and learning, including research and labour market information; and to enable the sharing of good practice in teaching and quality improvement between providers.

The new LSC structure will enhance the LSC's ability to share best practice through the new partnership teams feeding into the regional structure. This will be strengthened with the development of regional quality improvement partnerships.

School Exclusions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were permanently excluded from *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Lancashire local education authority areas in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [59600]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: number and percentage of permanently excluded pupils[2] 1999/2000 to 2003/04—Lancashire local authority area

	Primary		Secondary	
	Number	Percentage[3]	Number	Percentage[3]
1999/2000	20	0.02	140	0.19
2000/01[4]	30	0.03	210	0.28
2001/02[4]	40	0.04	240	0.32
2002/03[4]	30	0.03	300	0.40
2003/04[4]	40	0.04	280	0.37

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

[3] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.

[4] Figures are as confirmed by local authorities via the data checking exercise.

Source:

Annual Schools Census

School Leavers

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have left school at 16 in *(a)* Carlisle constituency and *(b)* Cumbria with less than the equivalent of five GCSEs at A to C grade in each year since 1994. [58586]

Jacqui Smith: Figures at constituency level are only available from 1996/97 onwards. Information is provided below for each academic year from 1996/97 to 2004/05 for Carlisle constituency, Cumbria local authority and England.

15-year-old pupils not achieving the equivalent of five GCSEs at A-C*

	Carlisle[1]		Cumbria[1]		England[2]
Academic year	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Percentage
2004/05	517	50.6	2,598	43.2	43.7
2003/04	494	51.0	2,699	44.7	46.3
2002/03	563	55.1	2,773	47.0	47.1
2001/02	536	54.8	2,710	47.3	48.4
2000/01	525	54.6	2,897	49.2	50.0
1999/2000	569	55.4	2,784	49.4	50.8
1998/99	585	58.4	2,963	52.4	52.1
1997/98	597	61.4	3,092	56.1	53.7
1996/97	583	59.5	3,195	56.5	54.9

[1] Local figures are based on maintained schools only.

[2] National figures are based on all schools.

School Meals

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the number and percentage of schools which have kitchens; [58620]

(2) in how many and what percentage of local authorities school meals are *(a)* produced in-house and *(b)* outsourced. [58622]

(3) how many and what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools provide a hot school meals service. [58623]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect this information.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much is spent on average for each school meal for *(a)* primary school pupils, *(b)* secondary school pupils and *(c)* juvenile offenders. [60038]

Jacqui Smith: Estimates based on responses to a recent survey indicate that, on average, local authorities (LA) delegate £1.49 per pupil eligible for free school meals per day at primary school and £1.53 per pupil eligible for free school meals per day at secondary school.

The Department's Cost of Schooling Survey indicated that, on average, parents with a child at primary school spent £1.46 for a school meal and parents with a child at secondary school spent £1.92 for a school meal in 2004.

The Department does not collect other information about per pupil spending on school meals or any information about spending on meals for juvenile offenders.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what plans she has to increase funding for school meals; [60039]

(2) when the Government expects to reach the target of spending 60 pence on each child for school lunches; [60040]

(3) what recent representations she has received on the issue of increasing the nutritional content of school lunches. [60041]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are determined to transform the quality of food in schools and supports the work local authorities and schools are doing to raise the nutritional standards of school meals.

In March 2005 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Ruth Kelly, announced a £235 million package to transform the quality of school meals. In

October 2005, as part of a three year package and paid as part of their Standards Fund Allocations, schools received a share of £30 million to enable them to fund local improvements such as increased training and working hours for school cooks. A further £60 million (£30 million/£30 million) will be paid in 2006 and 2007. Over the same period, local authorities will receive £130 million (£30 million/£50 million/£50 million).

There is no Government target for spending. The School Meals Review Panel report: Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food, concluded that the average cost of ingredients in primary schools was 48.5p; and in secondary schools was 59.8p. This shows that schools are already well on the way to meeting the Government's aspiration of helping schools to provide meals with ingredients costs of 50p for primary schools and 60p for secondary schools. In some cases, where they have already made significant improvements, schools are spending more than 50/60 pence.

The public consultation carried out between 3 October 2005 and 31 December 2005 on the recommendations in the School Meals Review Panel's Report generated 261 responses. The School Food Trust has announced its advice for the nutritional standards that should apply to school food offered across the school day, including items offered in vending machines and tuck shops. We will seek the views of key stakeholders during March.

Additionally, officials from the School Food Team have met with a number of industry representatives, who requested an opportunity to discuss specific issues, as part of the consultation process.

School Nurses

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which primary care trust areas have at least one full-time year-round qualified school nurse. [53585]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

September 2004 census showed that there were 2,409 (1,619 full-time equivalent) qualified nurses working in the school nursing service, of whom 856 (607 fte) have a post registration school nursing qualification.

On average each primary care trust (PCT), who provided data for the census on school nurses, has six (four fte) qualified school nurses providing year round cover.

The number of full-time qualified school nurses by PCT and trust has been placed in the Library.

Schools (Religious Ethos)

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the compatibility with Article 2 of Protocol 1 and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights of circumstances where the only practical choice of school is a school with a religious ethos; and if she will make a statement. [58888]

Jacqui Smith: Article 2 of Protocol 1 gives children the right of access to education. It also places an obligation on the state to acknowledge or take into account the right of parents to ensure that their child's education conforms to their own religious and philosophical convictions. However, it does not guarantee the right to a place at a particular school.

Article 14 prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of Convention rights on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

Taking into account section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 which gives parents the right to withdraw their child from religious education or collective worship, in our view, Article 2 of Protocol 1 is not infringed in cases where a school with a religious ethos may be the only one available to a parent.

Staff Strikes (Higher Education)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to minimise the effects of strikes by National Association of Teachers of Further and Higher Education and the Association of University Teachers on students in higher education. [57086]

Bill Rammell: Universities are autonomous and responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including deciding what to pay their own staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government play no part in this.

It is a matter for higher education institutions to consider how best they can minimise the adverse effects of the current dispute. The Government would encourage both employers and unions to reach a speedy resolution on this matter, to ensure minimal further disruption to students

Student Finance

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department has made an estimate of the number of students who would become ineligible for student support if eligibility was based on the combined income of a student's resident and non-resident parent instead of the household income measure. [60464]

Bill Rammell: We do not collect data on the income of non-resident parents and as such no estimate has been produced.

University Fees/Students

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to decrease the income threshold necessary for obtaining financial help with university fees. [57996]

Bill Rammell: From the 2006/07 academic year, all eligible full-time undergraduate students will be able to take out a loan to cover the cost of their tuition fees, regardless of their household income. However, we will be undertaking a review of household income thresholds and tapers for maintenance support to anticipate around 30 per cent. of new full-time undergraduate students qualifying for the full £2,700 non-repayable maintenance grant and around 50 per cent. qualifying for a full or partial grant in future academic years.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 690W, on university students, which institution in 2003–04 had the highest percentage of young full-time first degree from National Statistics socio-economic classes 4–7 students that is not a former polytechnic. [59869]

Bill Rammell: Harper Adams university college was the institution with the highest proportion of students from NS-SEC categories 4–7, which was not a former polytechnic. The following table indicates which institutions in the top 10 were not former polytechnics.

Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from National Statistics—socio-economic classes 4–7, English HE institutions, 2003/04

HE institution	*Number of young full-time first degree entrants*	*Percentage with known data*	*Percentage from NS-SEC 4–7*
10 institutions with the highest percentage			
Harper Adams University College[1]	210	89.6	68.3
University of Bradford[1]	1,185	71.4	49.2
Newman College of HE[1]	255	73.5	48.7
University of Wolverhampton	2,160	70.5	48.5
University of Greenwich	1,595	71.5	45.8
University of Luton[1]	600	62.3	44.8
Middlesex University	1,840	53.5	44.0
Bishop Grosseteste College[1]	215	88.4	43.5
London Metropolitan University	1,890	48.9	43.0
University of Westminster	2,670	66.6	43.0

[1] Indicates institutions which were not former polytechnics.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Administration Costs

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the administrative costs were of each agency for which he has responsibility in the last year for which figures are available; what the total of such costs was in that year; and whether the costs are regarded for the purposes of public expenditure statistical analyses as *(a)* identifiable and *(b)* non-identifiable. [39853]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administrative costs of each agency of the Department for 2004–05 are set out in the following table and are stated net of income. All the costs were identifiable for the purposes of the public expenditure statistical analyses. The Disability and Carers Service was set up in November 2004.

Agency	*Administration costs 2004–05 (£ million)*
Jobcentre Plus	3,148
Pension Service	831
Child Support Agency	326
Disability and Carers Service	120
Appeals Service	66
Rent Service	39
Total	4,530

Attendance Allowance

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* proportion of attendance allowance decisions were appealed against and *(b)* percentage of appeals by the claimant were successful in each of the last five years, broken down by disability benefit centre. [57461]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the disability and carers service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what *(a)* proportion of attendance allowance decisions were appealed against and *(b)* percentage of appeals by the claimant were successful, in each of the last five years, broken down by disability benefit centre.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the following table:

Attendance allowance appeals success rate by disability benefit centre, 2003 to 2006

	Appeals	*YTD 2003–04*	*YTD 2004–05*	*FEB YTD 2005–06*
Edinburgh	Registered	698	663	546
	Cleared	655	671	572
	Total Awards	153	158	146
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	28.7	31.3	29.4
	Total Decisions	533	505	496
Newcastle	Registered	881	577	507
	Cleared	962	559	527
	Total Awards	292	231	147
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	34.2	35.7	33.6
	Total Decisions	854	647	438
Leeds	Registered	1,392	997	828
	Cleared	1,360	1,043	851
	Total Awards	327	300	163
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	30.6	31.9	29.5
	Total Decisions	1,070	939	553

Attendance allowance appeals success rate by disability benefit centre, 2003 to 2006

	Appeals	*YTD 2003–04*	*YTD 2004–05*	*FEB YTD 2005–06*
Manchester	Registered	709	534	393
	Cleared	690	542	398
	Total Awards	197	110	71
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	29.3	25.6	22.4
	Total Decisions	673	429	317
Bootle	Registered	693	525	480
	Cleared	717	527	500
	Total Awards	171	115	79
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	26.9	22.9	19.1
	Total Decisions	636	503	413
Midlands	Registered	1,928	1,794	1,562
	Cleared	1,959	1,764	1,614
	Total Awards	539	408	417
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	29.8	29.8	30.1
	Total Decisions	1,809	1,371	1,385
Bristol	Registered	595	435	384
	Cleared	596	482	389
	Total Awards	93	89	38
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	22.4	21.7	14.6
	Total Decisions	415	410	261
Wales	Registered	347	384	322
	Cleared	378	387	320
	Total Awards	72	68	37
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	26.5	24.3	15.9
	Total Decisions	272	280	232
Wembley	Registered	1,502	1,629	1,436
	Cleared	1,467	1,715	1,433
	Total Awards	408	380	396
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	30.5	28.5	31.7
	Total Decisions	1,336	1,335	1,249
Sutton	Registered	1,296	1,044	348
	Cleared	1,350	1,067	420
	Total Awards	413	258	117
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	44.5	37.0	35.6
	Total Decisions	929	698	329
Glasgow	Registered	1,187	1,020	667
	Cleared	1,224	1,063	655
	Total Awards	451	387	189
	Awards as a percentage of Total Decisions	37.5	33.6	27.4
	Total Decisions	1,202	1,151	689

Note:
Data is not available for AA appeals prior to 2003–04.

I hope this is helpful.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claims for attendance allowances were made in each of the last five years; and what percentage were successful, broken down by disability benefits centre. [57465]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims for attendance allowances were made in each of the last five years; and what percentage were successful broken down by disability benefits centre.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information requested is in the following table.

Attendance allowance total claims success rate by disability benefit centre 2001–06

	Claims	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*YTD 2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Edinburgh	Registered	19,662	20,196	20,960	18,709	17,467
	Cleared	19,565	19,757	18,257	19,536	17,318
	Total awards	14,434	15,971	15,854	15,007	13,198
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	74.8	81.8	78.2	77.5	77.2
	Total decisions	19,290	19,517	20,263	19,359	17,092
Newcastle	Registered	19,193	20,259	20,301	18,575	18,222
	Cleared	19,316	20,090	18,161	18,399	18,232
	Total awards	13,996	14,245	14,088	14,244	14,113
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	73.5	71.9	70.1	78.2	78.5
	Total decisions	19,037	19,816	20,093	18,214	17,971
Leeds	Registered	34,817	35,586	35,837	33,265	31,558
	Cleared	34,181	35,981	32,157	33,365	32,019
	Total awards	23,845	25,214	25,010	23,954	23,308
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	70.8	71.2	70.0	72.7	74.1
	Total decisions	33,686	35,406	35,720	32,945	31,455
Manchester	Registered	31,494	22,422	23,405	21,840	20,106
	Cleared	21,502	22,582	20,549	22,365	20,136
	Total awards	16,260	17,034	17,720	17,484	16,243
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	76.8	76.8	78.5	79.2	82.0
	Total decisions	21,163	22,188	22,569	22,085	19,802
Bootle	Registered	26,284	27,591	28,504	27,152	24,816
	Cleared	26,578	27,384	26,037	27,290	25,341
	Total awards	20,612	21,554	23,223	22,549	21,487
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	78.9	79.9	82.0	83.6	85.9
	Total decisions	26,141	26,990	28,321	26,988	25,021
Midlands	Registered	64,786	66,587	70,182	66,653	61,800
	Cleared	64,431	69,449	63,765	66,534	62,322
	Total awards	47,615	51,599	53,482	50,351	48,111
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	75.5	75.5	76.9	76.5	78.2
	Total decisions	63,099	68,326	69,517	65,815	61,525
Bristol	Registered	38,259	40,071	42,944	39,852	37,538
	Cleared	37,999	40,423	38,237	38,551	37,733
	Total awards	29,739	32,606	33,801	31,390	31,450
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	79.8	82.1	81.4	82.6	84.9
	Total decisions	37,263	39,717	41,517	38,024	37,064
Wales	Registered	23,750	24,227	21,230	23,774	21,682
	Cleared	23,791	24,615	20,005	25,476	21,566
	Total awards	17,288	18,750	17,156	20,780	17,670
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	73.6	76.9	82.9	82.3	82.8
	Total decisions	23,501	24,381	20,703	25,235	21,331
Wembley	Registered	61,098	63,430	68,727	63,873	63,161
	Cleared	60,733	64,097	62,998	63,551	62,476
	Total awards	48,462	51,262	53,536	48,025	47,218
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	81.5	81.5	78.7	76.3	76.7
	Total decisions	59,488	62,886	68,036	62,911	61,558
Sutton	Registered	58,493	60,558	65,134	59,301	17,947
	Cleared	58,772	61,291	58,332	59,793	21,073
	Total awards	44,943	47,887	52,436	49,211	17,455
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	78.2	79.6	81.5	83.3	84.2
	Total decisions	57,453	60,169	64,336	59,078	20,728
Glasgow	Registered	18,030	18,670	19,960	17,920	16,351
	Cleared	18,435	18,599	18,825	18,160	16,434
	Total awards	12,055	13,746	15,965	13,999	13,018
	Awards as a percentage of total decisions	66.3	75.2	79.7	77.8	80.3
	Total decisions	18,185	18,291	20,019	18,003	16,218

[1] Figures up to February 2006

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the longest period was between a claim for attendance allowance being approved and the first payment being made in the last year for which figures are available. [60531]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the disability and carers service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 21 March 2006:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the longest period was between a claim for attendance allowance being approved and the first payment being made in the last year for which figures are available.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information that you requested is not available.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Benefit Disregards

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of disregarding for all benefits earned income up to the value of £80.80 per week from any work undertaken by any claimant. [58738]

Mr. Plaskitt: Such an estimate could be made only at disproportionate cost.

Child Support

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in respect of how many children child maintenance payments were received in each year since 1997. [56772]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to my right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Hilary Reynolds:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As the Chief Executive is currently on leave, I am responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in respect of how many children child maintenance payments were received in each year since 1997.

The information requested is provided in the attached table.

As you are aware, maintenance is paid on the basis of cases, each of which may be associated with one or more qualifying children. The Agency's data reflects this.

You will note from the table that the number of children associated with cases in receipt of maintenance, or with a Maintenance Direct arrangement in place, fell between February 2003 and February 2005. This is part of a larger trend, and the ratio of children per case has fallen steadily between February 1997 and December 2005. However the overall number of cases benefiting has continued to increase throughout this period.

I hope you find this helpful.

The number of cases that were receiving maintenance payments via the collection service or have a Maintenance Direct arrangement in place and the number of children this equates to. February 1997 to December 2005

	Number of cases in receipt of maintenance, via collection service	*Number of cases with a Maintenance Direct arrangement in place*	*Total cases*	*Number of children*
February 1997	132,000	64,000	196,000	307,000
February 1998	170,000	76,000	246,000	378,000
February 1999	212,000	87,000	299,000	453,000
February 2000	246,000	98,000	344,000	516,000
February 2001	262,000	97,000	358,000	532,000
February 2002	269,000	98,000	367,000	537,000
February 2003	283,000	86,000	369,000	536,000
February 2004	—	—	—	—
February 2005	288,000	90,000	378,000	527,000
December 2005	302,000	106,000	408,000	561,000

Notes:

1. Robust data from the new IT system (CS2) covering period March 2003 to March 2004 are not currently available, and is under development.
2. Maintenance Direct is an arrangement in which the Agency have carried out a maintenance calculation or assessment, and the non resident parent then pays his/her maintenance liability directly to the parent with care. As the Agency is no longer directly involved in the case, it is not possible to say definitively if payment is received where such an arrangement is in place.
3. December 2005 is the latest data currently available.
4. Figures rounded to the nearest thousand.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost of administering child support maintenance debt has been in each year since 1993. [56745]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available. Current accounting systems do not enable the Child Support Agency to match costs with specific outputs.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many members of staff employed by his Department are on temporary contracts. [56948]

Mrs. McGuire: As at 31 January 2006 the Department for Work and Pensions employed a total of 5,096 FTE staff on temporary contracts. Of this total, 2,076 were staff on fixed term appointments and 3,020 were staff on short term temporary contracts.

Departmental Expenditure

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many widescreen televisions have been purchased by his Department for use in London headquarters in each of the last five years; and what the cost was in each year. [39139]

Mrs. McGuire: Wide screen televisions are not capitalised on our balance sheet as they fall below the £5,000 threshold for office machinery. We do not have any wide screen televisions on the fixed asset register.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57670]

Mrs. McGuire: The basis of the Department's relocation strategy resulting from the Lyons' review is to relocate posts rather than people. Information on the number of posts relocated from London and the south-east to Wales between 1 June 2003 and 28 February 2006 is contained in the following table:

Location	*Number of posts*
Cwmbran	286
Wrexham	510
Pembroke Dock	386
Bridgend	77

Disability Allowance

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people have been registered for disability allowance in West Lancashire constituency in each year since 1997. [58435]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many young people have been registered for disability allowance in West Lancashire constituency in each year since 1997.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The requested information is in the following table:

All disability living allowance cases in entitlement for under-16s in West Lancashire parliamentary constituency as at August each year from 1997 to 2005

	All entitled cases (thousand)
2005	0.5
2004	0.5
2003	0.5
2002	0.4
2001	0.5
2000	0.6
1999	0.5
1998	0.5
1997	0.5

Notes:

1. Totals show cases either in payment or suspended.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by postcode using ONS data.
3. Definitions and Conventions:

Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 5 per cent. for older time series.

I hope this is helpful.

Housing Allowance

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1550W, on benefits, whether he expects to be able to provide an estimate of the cost of a national rollout of local housing allowance before the final decision on the amount of transitional funding is announced. [58051]

Mr. Plaskitt: The cost estimates of the national roll out of the local housing allowance will cover the impact on benefit expenditure and expenditure required to cover the transitional administrative costs of introducing the local housing allowance. Both these cost estimates will be determined by the final design of the local housing allowance. This will depend on the findings of the ongoing evaluation of the local housing allowance in the pathfinder areas and the outcome of the Welfare Reform Green Paper consultation "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work".

Housing Benefit

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 247W, on housing benefit, (1) how many people he estimates will have their housing benefit withdrawn as a result of antisocial behaviour in each year; and with which local authorities he is discussing pilot schemes to withdraw housing benefit as a result of antisocial behaviour; [57837]

(2) whether he plans to include provisions for withdrawing housing benefit as a result of antisocial behaviour in the forthcoming Welfare Reform Bill; [57838]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 247W, on housing benefit, if he will list the relevant bodies, stakeholders and experts he plans to consult informally on his plans to withdraw housing benefit as a result of antisocial behaviour. [57961]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Government announced in the Respect Action Plan, published on 10 January, that it is considering the use of sanctions to ensure that those households who are evicted for antisocial behaviour take up the help offered to them. We are currently assessing this idea more fully before deciding who to consult and whether to legislate. We have not held discussions about piloting with any local authorities.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of *(a)* disabled claimants and *(b)* care leavers under-25 years are (i) exempt from and (ii) subject to the single room rate restriction on housing benefit. [57955]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average duration of awards of incapacity benefit and income support made to those with myalgic encephalomyelitis in Lancaster and Wyre has been in the last three years; [55757]

(2) how many people with myalgic encephalomyelitis have been awarded *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* income support in Lancaster and Wyre on the basis of incapacity for work in the last 12 months; [55758]

(3) how many awards of incapacity benefit and income support have been made to patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis in Lancaster and Wyre *(a)* on the basis of and *(b)* without a report from an examining medical practitioner. [55763]

Mrs. McGuire: Due to the very small numbers of claimants involved it is not possible to accurately estimate the information requested in relation to incapacity benefit. No information is available in relation to income support.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many medical appeals concerning individuals diagnosed with myalgic encephalomyelitis were heard in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [59914]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available; records are not kept broken down by claimants' diagnoses.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will be in a position to answer question numbers 50674, 50675, 50676, 50698 and 50699 tabled by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead on 7 February 2006. [54150]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer my right hon. Friend to the replies for all the questions as follows:

Question 50674 on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 244W

Questions 50675, 50676, 50698 and 50699 on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2436W.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer question 39638, tabled on 19 December 2005, on debt centres. [54215]

Mr. Plaskitt: A reply was given to the hon. Member on 8 March 2006, *Official Record*, column 1547W.

Pensions

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much of the increase in the estimated levy required by the Pension Protection Fund is accounted for by *(a)* increased longevity and *(b)* lower interest rates; and what assumptions were used to calculate each in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2005. [56392]

Mr. Timms: The approaches taken by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) when arriving at a levy estimate in 2003 and that of the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) are not directly comparable.

However, GAD have recently updated their original estimate to September 2005 to reflect *(a)* changes in the level of schemes' assets and *(b)* GAD's broad assessment of the cost of funding the difference between those assets and the cost to the PPF of paying the PPF level of compensation. No other changes were made to update the model. The updated estimate of the PPF levy was £560 million, an increase of £260 million over the RIA estimate, which is broadly comparable with the PPF's levy estimate of £575 million. It is estimated that:

(a) £60 million of this increase relates to changes in the level of schemes' assets, together with the effect of changes to the relevant market interest rates on the liabilities ; and

(b) The balance of £220 million relates to changes in the mortality assumptions which reflected similar changes to the assumptions used by insurance companies when setting buy-out terms.

The original £300 million was a rounded estimate, which explains why the figures do not add up precisely.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of pensioners who would be able to commute their pension benefits to a lump sum because of serious ill-health if provision 08100080 of the Registered Pension Scheme Manual took effect in the event of a diagnosis of terminal illness regardless of life expectancy. [60452]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have been asked to reply.

Information about the number of pension scheme members likely to be diagnosed as terminally ill, regardless of life expectancy, is not available. So it is not possible to estimate the number of pensioners who would be able, regardless of life expectancy, to commute their pension benefits to a lump sum using the serious ill-health provisions described in paragraph 08100080 of the Registered Pension Scheme Manual.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners were able to commute their pension benefits to a lump sum in 2004–05 because of serious ill-health under provision 08100080 of the Registered Pension Scheme Manual. [60466]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have been asked to reply.

The serious ill-heath provisions explained in paragraph 08100080 of the Registered Pension Scheme Manual apply from 6 April onwards. So no pensioners commuted their pension benefits to lump sum under these provisions in the last year.

Private Office Costs

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55726]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions spent £600,000 on the Secretary of State's private office in the financial year 2004–05. This figure includes both staff and non-staff costs, and includes the costs for the Secretary of State's special advisers and their support team.

Shared Rooms

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average shared room rate has been in each of the local housing allowance pathfinder areas. [57956]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the following table.

Average shared room rate set by rent offices in local housing allowance pathfinders, March 2004–March 2006

£

	March		
	2004	*2005*	*2006*
Blackpool	48	50	50
Brighton	67	70	75
Conwy	39	39	45
Coventry	48	50	50
Edinburgh	61	62	65
Leeds	50	50	50
Lewisham	85	81	86
North East Lincolnshire	44	44	44
Teignbridge	54	60	61

[1] Figures are for April 2004.

Notes:

1. Figures are the shared room rates set by rent officers averaged across the broad rental market areas within each pathfinder.
2. The shared room rate is the maximum housing benefit to which a claimant is entitled and does not necessarily represent the amount of housing benefit in payment.

Source:

Rent Registration Service, Scotland; Rent Officer Service, Wales; and the Rent Service, England. March 2004–06.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52823]

Mr. Plaskitt: The agreed financial target for DWP in the 2004 Spending Review was that the Department will realise total annual efficiency gains of at least £960 million by 2007–08 of which at least half will be cashable. The financial settlement for the years 2005–06 to 2007–08 was made net of the planned financial efficiencies so that DWP will achieve its efficiency target by living within the financial allocation already made. As such there are no funds available to DWP to be re-spent.

Unemployment (Liverpool, Riverside)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the rates of unemployment among racial and ethnic minority groups in Liverpool, Riverside. [47907]

Margaret Hodge: Within the Liverpool, Riverside constituency the Granby ward is a designated priority ward because of its high level of unemployment and high concentration of ethnic minorities. According to the 2001 census, ethnic minorities made up 30.7 per cent. of the population (aged 16–74), and the overall rate of unemployment stood at 26.0 per cent. Across the constituency as a whole the overall rate of unemployment was 15.0 per cent. and 23.4 per cent. for ethnic minorities. The rate of inactivity was 51.7 per cent. overall and 57.2 per cent. for ethnic minorities. The latest benefit statistics (August 2005), show that there are 10,700 people receiving incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance and 10,400 income support claimants across the constituency.

The Department looks at local information on deprivation, need and diversity to help target the services we deliver. We use this data to help us with our resources allocation across Jobcentre Plus. We give higher priority to wards with high levels of unemployment (one and a half times the national average) and high concentrations of ethnic minorities (three times the national average). Granby is one such ward.

Tackling the problems of inner cities is central to meeting our aims of increasing prosperity and countering social exclusion. Our recently published Green Paper sets out our proposals.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Evesham Technology

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Leader of the House whether Evesham Technology made a bid to supply hon. Members with their computing needs. [60364]

Nigel Griffiths: Evesham Technology was one of 30 companies who replied to the advertisement for expressions of interest in the contract for upgrading hon. Members' IT equipment. It was not one of the 6 shortlisted companies invited to tender.

TRANSPORT

Railways

15. **Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding the Government will provide to the rail network in 2006–07. [59791]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made a statement to Parliament on 10 February 2005 setting out the Government's funding plans for the railway. This shows that some £5.8 billion of Government funds will be spent on the Railway in 2006–07.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve the marketing of railway services. [59936]

Derek Twigg: The marketing of rail services is a matter for their operators.

Noise Pollution

16. **Michael Gove:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on Government policy on noise pollution from airports in the South East. [59792]

Derek Twigg: Our basic aim is to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise. This aim applies to the South East as it does to the rest of the UK.

The Government set noise-related operating restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports, which include departure noise limits and night flying restrictions. At other airports, a range of similar measures are implemented by the airports themselves, responding to local circumstances.

In "The Future of Air Transport" white paper we set out the measures we wish to see larger UK airports (with over 50,000 movements a year, by jet aircraft over 34,000 kg) apply as a benchmark for mitigating aircraft noise.

Concessionary Bus Fares Scheme

18. **Mrs. Dorries:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the implementation of the concessionary bus fares scheme. [59795]

Dr. Ladyman: From 1 April 2006, 11 million people in England, aged 60 and over, or with disabilities, will be guaranteed free off-peak local bus travel for the first time.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact on other services of free bus fares for pensioners in Tyne and Wear; and if he will make a statement. [59788]

Mr. Darling: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister—the department responsible for local government funding—continues to talk to Tyne and Wear about the funding for concessionary fares.

A11 (Fiveways Roundabout)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce the conclusion of his investigation into whether improvements to the Fiveways roundabout on the A11 should be carried out. [59621]

Dr. Ladyman: The study has been completed and I am considering the recommendations alongside the advice from Regions associated with the regional funding allocations exercise.

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Highways Agency has plans to seek compulsory purchase orders on properties along the A21 between Flimwell and Robertsbridge. [59641]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering the advice from the south east region on the region's transport priorities, including schemes on the A21, as well as other schemes in the south east. We plan to make an announcement later this year.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the proposed A21 upgrade; and if he will make a statement. [59632]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering the South East region's advice on the priority it attaches to the upgrade of the A21 within the indicative funding allocation for major transport schemes in the South East. No other recent representations have been received. We hope to announce our response to the South East region's advice later this year.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to publish the draft orders for the proposed A21 upgrade. [60066]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering the advice from the South East Region on transport priorities, including schemes on the A21, as well as other schemes in the South East. We plan to make an announcement later this year.

A47/A11

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of developing route management studies for the *(a)* A47/A12 and *(b)* A11 has been. [59620]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has carried out route management strategy studies that have resulted in Route Management Strategies.

The Agency's expenditure for developing the A47/A12 Route Management Strategy from 2002 to 2005 was £195,000.

The expenditure for developing the A11 Route Management Strategy, including an update, from 2003 to 2005 was £118,000.

The Agency estimates that it will spend a further £1,000 a year to produce an annual update of these two route management strategies.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with *(a)* Ministerial colleagues and *(b)* others about the impact on (i) the economy and (ii) regeneration of the local area of upgrading the (A) A47 and (B) A11. [59622]

Dr. Ladyman: I discuss a wide range of transport issues, including road schemes, and their impact on (i) the economy and (ii) regeneration with Ministerial colleagues and others on a regular basis.

A555

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on funding for the proposed A555 relief road. [60246]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering proposals for this scheme and will make an announcement in due course.

British Transport Police

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many British Transport Police have been employed in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* the boroughs of the Tees Valley sub-region. [59740]

Derek Twigg: The British Transport Police (BTP) have provided the following information on the number of police employed in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the North East. A figure for England alone is not available as one of BTP's operational areas, "Wales and Western", covers both England and Wales.

The data requested is not collected broken down by boroughs and therefore can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

	England and Wales	*BTP North Eastern Area*
1997–98	1,898	195
1998–99	1,906	205
1999–2000	1,874	197
2000–01	1,907	192
2001–02	1,920	188
2002–03	2,001	193
2003–04	2,073	197
2004–05	2,283	205

Bus Routes (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bus routes are operating in West Lancashire. [60223]

Dr. Ladyman: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) holds information on bus services broken down by traffic area. West Lancashire is in the north western traffic area where there are 4,399 bus routes currently operating. To break this data down by constituency can be done only at disproportionate cost.

Cabin Air Supply

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 17W, to the hon. Member for Tamworth (Mr. Jenkins), on cabin air supply, what progress has been made in assessing the merits of participating in Federal Aviation Administration research into cabin air quality and long-term health. [59654]

Derek Twigg: We are awaiting the outcome of the evidence review being conducted by the independent Committee on Toxicity (COT) before taking a view. The COT process should provide us with a clearer idea of any future research requirements and place us in a better position to evaluate possible participation in the American study funded by the FAA. The FAA funding was not, of course, reliant on UK participation.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has received the report from Boeing on Aerotoxic Syndrome affecting pilots during flight; and if he will make a statement. [59353]

Derek Twigg: We are not aware of any recent reports by Boeing on "aerotoxic syndrome."

The Department for Transport does not want anyone travelling by air to be exposed to serious health risks. We have arranged for the independent Committee on Toxicity (COT) to conduct an evidence review of any such risks in cabin air. This process is under way and the formal COT meeting will be held in public in May or July this year.

Cargo Transfers

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the process is by which regulation *(a)* 48 and *(b)* 49 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) is applied to assess the implications for European wildlife sites of ship-to-ship transfers of oil and other chemicals (i) in harbour authority areas and (ii) elsewhere in UK territorial waters; and what assessment he has made of the compliance of each process with the requirements of the EU habitats directive [60302]

Dr. Ladyman: Regulations 48 and 49 of the Habitats Regulations do not apply to the ship-to-ship transfer of oils or other chemicals. They apply to applications for planning consent.

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how his Department monitors the ship-to-ship transfer of oil and other chemicals within UK harbour limits. [60303]

Dr. Ladyman: The Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention) Regulations 1998 require harbour authorities to have contingency plans which meet the requirements of those regulations. There is a further requirement to report any pollution, including pollution from ship-to-ship transfers, to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the compliance of the consenting regime for ship-to-ship transfer of oil in UK territorial waters with UK Government responsibilities under the EU habitats directive, with particular reference to *(a)* the assessment of plans or projects likely to have an effect on European wildlife sites, *(b)* the consideration of alternative solutions and of imperative reasons of over-riding public interest in the case of plans or projects assessed as likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of European wildlife sites and *(c)* European protected species. [60305]

Dr. Ladyman: There is no UK consenting regime governing the practice of ship-to-ship transfers. As a competent authority under the EU habitats directive the MCA has regard to the requirements of the directive, where relevant, in the exercise of its functions.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which organisations other than the police are able to access information from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency on car registrations and owners. [56958]

Dr. Ladyman: Information held on the DVLA vehicle register is lawfully released under Regulation 27 of the "Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002". Regulation 27 allows DVLA to release information to the police, local authorities investigating an offence or decriminalised parking contravention, and anyone who has 'reasonable cause' for wanting the information made available to him. 'Reasonable cause' is not defined in the legislation. Each request is considered individually on its merits and no organisations are explicitly included or excluded from being able to receive information.

A review of the regulations governing the release of data is currently underway. I refer the hon. Member to my Written Statement of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 50–51WS.

First Great Western Timetable

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what responses were received from members of the public to the recent consultation on the Draft First Great Western Timetable from December 2006; and how he plans to respond to the issues raised. [59215]

Derek Twigg: The Department has received over 300 individual letters and emails, and three petitions regarding the consultation on the Draft First Great Western Timetable. First Great Western have also received 3350 individual emails and letters, and a number of petitions. We are now considering these responses.

High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether motorcyclists will have access to the proposed *(a)* high occupancy vehicle and *(b)* carpool lanes on (i) the M1 and (ii) the M25. [59105]

Dr. Ladyman: I anticipate that motorcyclists will be allowed to use the high occupancy vehicle lanes (which are also known as car pool or car share lanes) which are to be built as part of the M1 junction 6A to 10 widening scheme and trialled between Junction 7 and 10. The final decision will be made once we have confirmed the exact details of the scheme, such as the lane to be used and the lane segregation arrangements, and we have satisfied ourselves that it would be safe for motorcyclists to use the lanes.

We are continuing to investigate the scope for high occupancy vehicle lanes on M25, but decisions have not yet been made. Consequently it is too early to say what, if any, restrictions might be placed on their use.

High-speed Railway Track Systems

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the implementation of European Council Directive 96/48/EC in relation to ballastless high-speed railway track systems. [59429]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Directive 96/48/EC is applicable to UK high speed railways and ballastless track is permitted by the technical standards for interoperability subject to system verification.

House Building Targets

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the future transport needs of Norfolk in relation to the Government's house building targets for the county. [59624]

Dr. Ladyman: The draft East of England Plan, prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly, includes their proposals for future levels of housing and transport provision in Norfolk.

These proposals were considered by an independent Panel at the recent Examination in Public into the Plan. The Panel's report is due to be submitted to Government mid-2006.

Ministers look forward to receiving the Panel's recommendations and to considering these further in due course. We will then embark on a further public consultation before the Plan is finalised during spring 2007.

Improvement Schemes (Norfolk)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the cost of completing the improvement schemes in the targeted programme of investments. [59626]

Dr. Ladyman: The targeted programme of improvements is subject to external cost pressures; including rising energy prices. A cost management action plan, which also includes a more detailed analysis of programme cost pressures will be completed shortly.

Joyriders

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many deaths were caused by joyriders in the Cleveland police area in each of the last 10 years. [60010]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

King's Cross Station

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* timetable for and *(b)* cost is of the refurbishment and regeneration work at London's King's Cross station; what progress has been made with the project to date; and if he will make a statement. [59394]

Derek Twigg: The London Underground works at King's Cross are being delivered in two phases. Phase 1 works, including the new western ticket hall and the refurbished and enlarged tube ticket hall, are due to be completed this year. The current programme shows a completion date for the phase 2 works, which include the new northern ticket hall, in 2010. The northern ticket hall works re-commenced on site in March 2006.

Network Rail is planning to complete the construction of a new Western concourse at King's Cross by the 2012 Olympics. The western concourse project is in the design stage and applications to the planning authority are expected later this year.

The total cost of the London Underground and Network Rail western concourse works is around £1 billion.

Network Rail is also planning to carry out renewal work to the fabric of King's Cross station and this project is in the initial planning stages.

M1

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next expects widening of the M1 motorway to be carried out, apart from the stretch of motorway north of junction 8; and at which locations. [59426]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The M1 widening schemes are expected at the locations and at the times specified as follows:

Scheme	*Start of works date*
M1 J6A-10 Widening	March 2006
M1 J10–13 Widening	Late summer 2008[1]
M1 J21–30 Widening (Contract 1)	Summer 2007
M1 J21–30 Widening (Contract 2)	Autumn 2009
M1 J31–32 Widening	Autumn 2006
M1 J30-J31 and J32-J42	Anticipated start of works summer 2010[2]

[1] Dependent on completion of M1 J6A-10 widening.

[2] Delivery of these schemes is subject to funding and completion of statutory procedures.

Mini-motorbikes

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what data his Department collects on accidents involving mini-motorbikes. [58386]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* Personal injury road accident data in Great Britain are collected by the police and reported to the Department using the STATS19 accident report format. While motorised mini-motorbikes involved in personal injury accidents on public roads will be recorded in STATS 19, they are not identified as a distinct group of vehicles.

The vast majority of these vehicles do not meet the required European and UK technical standards for road vehicles, cannot be road-registered and must not be used on our public roads, footpaths, bridleways or cycle tracks. Where they are used illegally or antisocially the police have a range of powers under road traffic law and the Police Reform Act 2002 which can be used against offenders.

The Department for Transport is aware that there have been a number of accidents involving these vehicles and considering the safety and other issues raised by mini-motorbikes.

Mobile Telephones

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken to encourage mobile telephone operators to use existing Network Rail infrastructure along tracks for transmission purposes. [59669]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* This is an operational matter for Network Rail who will reply directly to the hon. Member.

Motor Cycle Licences

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1141W, on motorcycle licences, what progress has been made towards political agreement with EU partners on the proposed new European Community Directive on driving licences, with particular reference to the proposals for new requirements in respect of motorcycles. [60565]

Dr. Ladyman: The proposed Directive was discussed at the Transport Council in December 2005 but agreement was not achieved. Negotiations on this dossier continue. The next Transport Council will take place on 27 March 2006.

Motorway Signage (Advertising)

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the use of brand advertising on motorway signage. [60166]

Dr. Ladyman: Current policy and regulations permit the name and logo of the motorway service area (MSA) operator in their house style to be displayed on a header board above the advance informatory half-mile and slip road signs before each MSA. In addition the names of the operators of the next three MSAs may be shown using the standard motorway alphabet on a sign sited one mile in advance of each MSA. No other company names or logos may be displayed.

Network Rail

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to allow Network Rail to finance capital projects beyond the existing Government indemnity; and if he will make a statement. [59934]

Derek Twigg: The Financial Indemnity provided by the Secretary of State for Transport allows Network Rail to raise sufficient finance for all its planned investment projects.

Night Flights

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* environmental and *(b)* economic impact of night flights at (i) Gatwick, (ii) Stansted and (iii) Heathrow airports. [59542]

Derek Twigg: Chapter 4 and Annex C of the Stage One consultation document on night flying restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted set out our assessment of the environmental impact of night flying at each of these airports, as required by Directive 2002/30/EC. On the basis of the evidence available to us, including the responses to Stage One, the Stage Two consultation document then set out environmental objectives, and proposed noise-abatement objectives, for each airport.

The Government's consideration of the economic impact of night flying takes account of the combined effects on the national economy of night flights at the designated airports, Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

A broad statement on the economic importance of night flying at the designated airports was made in the draft regulatory impact assessment published in the stage two consultation document on night flying restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, published on 10 June 2005.

We acknowledged in the stage two consultation that responses to the stage one consultation had not provided a comprehensive picture of the economic impact of night flights and of night restrictions. The stage two consultation therefore made a specific request for further information to inform the Government's decision-making. The consultation closed on 16 September 2005 and the Department for Transport is analysing responses from consultees.

A final Regulatory Impact Assessment will be published when the decision on night flying restrictions is announced in due course, as will a summary of consultation responses.

Rail Services

Chris Grayling To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 556W, on trains, what five train services had the highest number of passengers in excess of capacity levels in each of the 10 largest cities in the UK. [54962]

Derek Twigg: Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PIXC) applies to weekday commuter trains arriving in London between 07:00 and 09:59 and those departing between 16:00 and 18:59.

The five train services serving London with the highest levels of Passengers In Excess Of Capacity in autumn 2005 were:

Train operating company	*Departs*	*From*	*To*	*Arrives*	*Passenger capacity*	*Passenger load*	*PIXC (number of passengers)*	*Load factor (percentage)*
One	08:02	Cambridge	London Liverpool Street	09:19	234	433	199	185
Thameslink	16:33	Sutton	Luton	18:04	412	618	206	150
Southern	07:51	London Victoria	London Bridge (via Clapham Junction)	08:36	635	944	309	149
WAGN	18:15	London Kings Cross	Cambridge	19:09	494	713	219	144
South West Trains	08:04	Isleworth	London Waterloo	08:43	792	1138	346	144

The PIXC measure does not apply to other cities in the UK and such information cannot be provided, due to the disproportionate cost in resource required to extract this in the format requested.

Road Budget (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding Lancashire county council has received from his Department for its road budget in each year since 1997. [59028]

Dr. Ladyman: The funding provided directly to Lancashire county council since 1997 is provided in the following table. The integrated transport block funding can be used for local highways or public transport capital projects. It is for Lancashire to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities. Lancashire did not receive any expenditure for major road schemes, costing over £5 million, in this timeframe.

Lancashire county council

£ million

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Integrated Transport Block	2.203	3.833	4.200	11.200	11.922	12.051	13.033	11.000
Capital Highways Maintenance	1.465	3.048	6.096	16.630	17.782	13.337	16.176	14.865

Road Building Programme

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Government's road building programme. [59881]

Dr. Ladyman: We are making good progress on delivering our programme of major improvements to the strategic road network. Since 2001, we have completed 36 major trunk road and motorway schemes, including the M6 Toll. 15 schemes are currently under construction and the Highways Agency's Business Plan identifies a further 27 schemes which are planned to start construction by April 2008. In the three years to 2007–08, we plan to spend £1.9 billion on major improvement schemes on the trunk road and motorway network.

Road Closures

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many unscheduled *(a)* road and *(b)* lane closures due to road accidents there have been on the motorways and trunk road network in the last 12 months; what the average duration of such closure was in each local authority area; and what assessment he has made of the average cost to the economy of such closures. [59627]

Dr. Ladyman: In the 12 month period March 2005 to February 2006, the Highways Agency's National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) recorded 8,590 accidents resulting in partial or total road closure of greater than 15 minutes' duration, on the English Strategic Road Network. Records are not kept centrally on other more minor incidents. The following table shows the monthly breakdown of the NTCC figures. Assessment of the cost to the economy of unplanned closures is not routinely undertaken.

Road accidents

Number

Month	*Lane closure*	*Total road closure*	*Total*
March 2005	503	162	665
April 2005	475	180	655
May 2005	551	201	752
June 2005	559	187	746
July 2005	557	171	728
August 2005	577	181	758
September 2005	468	178	646
October 2005	512	191	703
November 2005	545	215	760
December 2005	620	224	844
January 2006	486	156	642
February 2006	502	189	691
Total	6355	2235	8590

The average duration of these events, from their identification through to conditions returning to normal, was 2.5 hours. A table showing NTCC records by local authority has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Road Traffic Accidents (Wild Animals)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the cost of requiring the Motoring Insurance Bureau to act as the insurer of last resort in respect of personal injury claims resulting from collisions between motor vehicles and wild animals. [60465]

Dr. Ladyman: We have made no assessment.

South-west Franchise (Bidding Process)

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will make public the documents concerning the South West franchise bidding process. [59679]

Derek Twigg: The South Western Franchise Consultation document was published in November 2005. The conclusions drawn from the stakeholder consultation and the specification against which bids are to be prepared is planned to be issued in early April.

The invitation to tender documentation is scheduled to be issued at the end of March and will be restricted to the participating bidders during the competitive tendering process. It will then be available after the successful franchisee is announced which is anticipated to be in the autumn.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which routes and stations in the South West franchise area will be closed as a consequence of the Government's specification document, for the bidding process for the train operating companies. [59680]

Derek Twigg: None.

Thameslink 2000

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had on the funding of the first phase of Thameslink 2000. [59186]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport will not be in a position to consider funding of this project in advance of any decision on Network Rail's application for a Transport and Works Act Order and other related planning applications.

Track Maintenance

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect of litter, rubbish and debris on railway lines on the effective operation of train companies' timetables. [60372]

Derek Twigg: This is the responsibility of Network Rail and the train operating companies, who have a number of measures in place to minimise the effects of litter, rubbish and debris on the running of trains.

Train Franchises

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the pre-qualification document for the *(a)* Virgin Cross-Country, *(b)* East Midlands and *(c)* West Midlands franchise will be released. [59681]

Derek Twigg: It is anticipated that the advertisement inviting prospective bidders to submit applications to pre-qualify for the Cross Country, West Midlands and East Midlands franchises will be issued in June 2006.

Transport Spending (Norfolk)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact of planning gain supplement on future transport spending in Norfolk. [59625]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government recently consulted on how planning gain supplement (PGS) might fund additional investment in the local and strategic infrastructure to support housing growth, and is currently considering responses to that consultation.

PRIME MINISTER

Wilson Doctrine

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his written statement of 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 173WS, on the Wilson Doctrine, when he expects to make a further statement. [60533]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my written ministerial statement, 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 173WS and my answers at Prime Minister's Questions on 18 and 25 January.

HEALTH

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department *(a)* has undertaken and *(b)* plans to undertake into the reasons for trends in the abortion rate in England and Wales between 2003 and 2004; and if she will make a statement. [59457]

Caroline Flint: While the 2004 abortion statistics showed a slight increase in the abortion rate per 1,000 resident women aged 15–44, the under 18 and under 16 abortion rates decreased. In addition, more abortions were performed at an earlier gestation. The 2004 statistics are available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/75/74/04117574.pdf.

It is a key aim of the Government to reduce unintended pregnancy rates, as featured in both the sexual health and teenage pregnancy strategies, and provision of good quality contraceptive services are essential to achieve this. We are investing £40 million over the next two years to improve access to contraceptive services. We have asked primary care trusts (PCTs) to complete a national questionnaire of contraceptive services. The results will inform the publication of best practice guidance by the Department and will help PCTs determine how best to meet gaps in local services. In addition, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has published guidance on long-acting methods of contraception which should raise awareness and usage of all the methods.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish the abortion statistics for 2005; and if she will make a statement. [59459]

Caroline Flint: The annual 2005 abortion statistics will be published by the Department in July 2006. Provisional abortion data for January to September

2005 is available in the Office for National Statistics' publication Health Statistics Quarterly 29 at: www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/HSQ29.pdf.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which 10 primary care organisations had the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest abortion rates in England and Wales per 1000 women aged 15 to 44 in 2004. [59461]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is contained within the 2004 abortion statistics for England and Wales which can be found in the Department's Statistical Bulletin 2005/11 and this is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/75/74/04117574.pdf

Agency Nurses

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many agency nurses were employed by the NHS in *(a)* Peterborough, *(b)* the Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk Strategic Health Authority area and *(c)* England in each of the past five years; and at what cost. [48667]

Mr. Byrne: Information about the numbers of agency nurses employed locally is not collected centrally.

Alcohol Dependency

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how her Department's £15 million funding for alcohol dependency projects in 2007–08 will be allocated between treatment and preventative care. [58356]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) have been notified that £15 million per annum will be included within the PCTs general allocation from 2007–08 onwards to help PCTs improve their local arrangements for commissioning and delivering alcohol interventions.

It is for each PCT to decide how best to allocate the funds made available to them from central Government.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what Government funding is available to organisations helping people to overcome alcohol addiction; and if she will make a statement. [57530]

Caroline Flint: The national health service spends an estimated £217 million on alcohol treatment services (alcohol needs assessment research project). Primary care trusts (PCTs) have been notified that £15 million per annum will be included within the PCTs' general allocation from 2007–08 onwards to help PCTs improve their local arrangements for commissioning and delivering alcohol interventions. PCTs may commission treatment from a range of provides, including voluntary bodies.

Alcohol-related Illness

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidences of alcohol-related illness have been treated within the NHS in Suffolk in each year since 1997. [58508]

Caroline Flint: The information in the table provides the number of finished consultant episodes and patients where there was a primary diagnosis of alcohol related diseases from 1997–98 to 2004–05 for the strategic health authority of residence for Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire national health service hospitals.

Counts of finished consultant episodes and patients where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol related diseases[1] *in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority, national health service hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2004–05*

Year	*Finished consultant episodes*
1997–98	1,340
1998–99	1,501
1999–2000	1,719
2000–01	1,872
2001–02	1,893
2002–03	2,001
2003–04	2,387
2004–05	2,902

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis.

F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.

K70: Alcoholic liver disease.

T51: Toxic effect of alcohol.

Ambulance Services (Sussex)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the cost of restructuring ambulance services in Sussex; and what representations she has received about this. [45675]

Caroline Flint: The purpose of the proposed changes to configuration is to ensure that ambulance trusts have the capacity and the capability to fully realise the strategic vision for ambulance trusts set out in the recent review of ambulance services, "Taking Healthcare to the Patient-Transforming NHS Ambulance Services". "Taking Healthcare to the Patient" set out how the range and quality of services provided to patients by ambulance services should be improved, for example through the provision of quality call handling and advice, a wider range of services such as diagnostics and the management of long term conditions and even better care for patients with life-threatening conditions.

While the purposes of these proposed changes are not to deliver cost-savings, we do expect efficiencies to be generated. Any efficiency savings that are made will, in the short-term, be set against the costs of transition, and in the longer-term be available for re-investment by the trust into improving patient care.

Examples of areas in which efficiencies may be realised are management and administrative positions, headquarters and estates, and better use of resources. However, these decisions are a local matter and it is not for us to pre-empt them.

The consultation for the proposed configuration of national health service ambulance trusts in England is being led by strategic health authorities (SHAs). SHAs will co-ordinate consultation locally and ensure that relevant authorities and interested parties are able to express their views. A full analysis of the responses received by the SHAs and the Department will be undertaken at the end of the consultation. The consultation will conclude on 22 March 2006.

Arthritis

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding the Government have provided for research into treatments for those suffering from arthritis in the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [58548]

Mr. Byrne: The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

MRC expenditure on arthritis and rheumatism research in the last five years for which figures are available has been as follows:

	Expenditure on research (£ million)
1999–2000	4.8
2000–01	3.9
2001–02	4.2
2002–03	6.8
2003–04	6.8

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service. The Department's national research programme spend on projects related to arthritis in the period from 1999 to 2005 was £1.7 million.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to and managed by NHS organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a large number concerned with arthritis, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Audiology

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were training to become audiologists in the last period for which figures are available. [46364]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the number of people training to become audiologists in 2004–05.

	2004–05
Grade A training for clinical scientists in audiology	22
BSC in audiology	180
Training for audiology technicians	33
Diploma in hearing therapy	6

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for *(a)* children's, *(b)* adults' and *(c)* all hearing tests for each NHS trust in (i) the county of Lancashire and (ii) West Lancashire constituency; and if she will make a statement. [58456]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Autism

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are diagnosed with autism; and how many people were diagnosed in each year since 1997. [57658]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally. Diagnoses of autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in hospitals is shown in the table.

Number of finished consultant episodes involving a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders, by age at end of episode, England, 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Age at end of episode			
Year	*16 and under*	*Aged over 16*	*Unknown*	*All diagnoses*
2004–05	6,170	3,000	0	9,170
2003–04	5,770	2,390	0	8,160
2002–03	5,630	2,320	0	7,950
2001–02	5,180	2,100	0	7,280
2000–01	4,980	1,750	10	6,730
1999–2000	4,200	1,490	0	5,680
1998–99	4,030	1,470	10	5,510
1997–98	3,100	1,110	10	1,220

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health & Social Care Information Centre

ASDs include childhood Autism, atypical Autism, Asperger's syndrome, Rett's syndrome, and other less common ASDs.

Benzodiazepine Addiction

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessments she has made of the number of long-term benzodiazepine addicts. [47362]

Caroline Flint: The Department has made no formal assessment of the number of long-term benzodiazepine addicts.

The number of prescriptions for benzodiazepines has fallen significantly from 15.8 million in 1992 to 12.4 million in 2004[1]. However, with the exception of instalment prescribing for diazepam, a benzodiazepine, we are unable to distinguish between prescriptions issued to patients who are addicts and those who are not.

[1] The prescription information was obtained from the prescription cost analysis system and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community, that is, by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Total prescriptions include not only prescriptions originating from general medical practitioners in England but also from hospital doctors, dentists and, up to March 1994, armed services doctors and dentists, provided they were dispensed in the community. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospital or private prescriptions.

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her latest estimate is of the number of benzodiazepine addicts in England; and what methods her Department uses to compile this information. [53563]

Caroline Flint: We do not have records centrally of the number of benzodiazepine addicts in England. Prescription information does not tell us how many repeat prescriptions for benzodiazepines are issued to the same person, so it is not possible to pinpoint how many people are dependent. However, the number of prescriptions has fallen significantly from 15.8 million in 1992 to 12.4 million in 2004[1]. With the exception of instalment prescribing for diazepam, a benzodiazepine, we are unable to distinguish between prescriptions issued to patients who are addicts and those who are not.

[1] The prescription information was obtained from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) system and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community, that is, by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Total prescriptions include not only prescriptions originating from general medical practitioners in England but also from hospital doctors, dentists and, up to March 1994, armed services doctors and dentists, provided they were dispensed in the community. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospital or private prescriptions.

Bournemouth Primary Care Trust

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money from its reserve fund Bournemouth primary care trust is required to pay back to the strategic health authority within 2005–06. [58931]

Caroline Flint: I am informed by Dorset and Somerset strategic health authority (SHA), that Bournemouth teaching primary care trust has not returned any money to the Dorset and Somerset SHA in 2005–06.

Chlamydia Testing Kits

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will extend the scheme of offering free chlamydia kits at chemists in London to other areas of the country. [52432]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* An evaluation of the chlamydia screening pathfinder project is being carried out concurrently with the London pilot. Decisions about whether to extend the scheme nationally will be made once the evaluation has reported.

Choose and Book

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Choose and Book System has cost to implement to date. [54874]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for St. Albans (Anne Main) on 10 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1812–13W.

Colon cancer

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to Question 56552 tabled by the hon. Member for Hertsmere on 1 March 2006, on bowel cancer screening. [60013]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was given on 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2320W.

Community Pharmacies

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community pharmacies in Ruislip-Northwood constituency have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [59647]

Caroline Flint: Information on the number of community pharmacies by constituency is not collected centrally.

However, information prior to 2002 is available by health authority (HA), and from 2002, by primary care trust (PCT). The Ruislip-Northwood constituency is currently served by Hillingdon PCT which also covers the Uxbridge, and Hayes and Harlington constituencies. It previously sat within Hillingdon HA (1997–2002).

Table one shows the number of community pharmacies in Hillingdon HA between 1997 and 2002.

Table two shows the number of community pharmacies in Hillingdon PCT from 2002 onwards.

Table 1: Hillingdon Health Authority, 1997–98 to 2001–02

	Total number of pharmacies in Hillingdon HA[1]	*Opened*	*Closed*
1997–98	63	—	—
1998–99	62	—	1
1999–00	62	—	—
2000–01	62	—	—
2001–02	62	—	—

Table 2: By Hillingdon Primary Care Trust, 2002–03 onwards

	Total number of pharmacies in Hillingdon PCT1	*Opened*	*Closed*
2002–03	62	—	—
2003–04	62	—	—
2004–05	62	—	—

[1] As at 31 March of each year.

Data on pharmacy numbers.

From October 2002, PCTs took over responsibility for community pharmacies from HAs. Thereforedata on the number of pharmacies in England with NHS contracts is broken down to HA level until 2001–02, and PCT level from 2002–03 onwards. The change from HAs to PCTs may have resulted in some boundary changes and this is reflected in the data.

Information on the number of community pharmacies is collected from PCTs via the annual PHS1 data collection. The latest data available on General Pharmaceutical Services (1994–95 to 2004–05) was published on 27 January 2006. See the following link for this publication: www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/genphmsvcengwaldecade05

The survey collects information on openings and closures of community pharmacies. Changes of address, relocations within the PCT are excluded. However, pharmacy minor relocations across PCT boundaries are included as an opening or closure as appropriate. Establishments that close under old ownership and re-open under new ownership within 10 days are regarded as staying open, even if the period between closing and opening straddles review periods.

Data for 2005–06 is not yet available.

Delayed Discharges

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many delayed discharges there were in acute hospitals serving the West Lancashire area in the last 12 months; and how many acute hospital bed nights these represented. [58452]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Acute delayed transfers of care, acute hospitals serving the West Lancashire area

	Hospitals serving the West Lancashire area		*Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust*		*Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust*		*Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust*		*Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust*	
	Delayed transfers of care	*Number of days delayed*	*Delayed transfers of care*	*Number of days delayed*	*Delayed transfers of care*	*Number of days delayed*	*Delayed transfers of care*	*Number of days delayed*	*Delayed transfers of care*	*Number of days delayed*
March 2005	50	1,294 47	17	620	7	178	11	202	15	294
April 2005	47	1,196	23	523	3	107	11	216	10	350
May 2005	47	918	16	534	2	71	21	150	8	163
June 2005	42	1,065	17	636	3	101	10	120	12	206
July 2005	43	859	19	456	6	99	11	97	7	207
August 2005	43	996	20	603	4	115	15	148	4	130
September 2005	31	1,132	19	702	2	115	4	186	6	129
October 2005	60	1,184	32	808	6	63	14	153	8	160
November 2005	47	1,093	18	665	3	89	15	164	11	175
December 2005	36	1,307	19	638	3	92	4	304	10	273
January 2006	48	1,221	18	555	6	104	12	246	12	316
February 2006	43	982	20	523	4	74	9	126	10	259

Source:
SitReps.

The delayed transfer of care figures are based on a snapshot taken on the last typical Thursday in the month. This differs to the day used in the separate, quarterly local delivery plans return (LDPR) commissioner collections on which the figures published in the Statistical Supplement to the chief executive's report to the NHS, December 2005 are based. The number of days delayed sums all delays in the month.

Due to the way the data are collected, the number of days delayed data for March, June, September and December 2005 are based on five weeks' data—all other months are based on four weeks' data.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many jobs from her Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [58502]

Mr. Byrne: No jobs from the Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001.

Drug and Alcohol Misuse

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for treatment for alcohol misuse in each primary care trust area in the South East Region; and if she will make a statement. [58365]

Caroline Flint: This information is not held centrally.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress her Department is making towards reducing average waiting times for treatment for alcohol misuse. [58366]

Caroline Flint: Taken from alcohol needs assessment research project (ANARP), the average waiting time for assessment was 4.6 weeks. The shortest average wait for a region was 3.3 weeks and the longest wait was 6.5 weeks. The programme of improvement guidance and models of care for alcohol misuse are to follow.

ECJ Ruling 2006/C 36/16 OJ

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely effect of European Court of Justice ruling 2006/C 36/16, OJ 11 February 2006, upon UK businesses; and if she will make a statement. [59809]

Caroline Flint: The United Kingdom Government supports the food safety measures contained in the Smoke Flavourings Regulation (EC 2065/2003/EC) and these remain in place following the judgement. A regulatory impact assessment was carried out on the impact of this regulation on UK businesses.

No assessment has been made of the likely effect of the ruling from the European Court of Justice on UK businesses. The legal challenge was based entirely on the appropriateness of the legal base of the regulation.

Food Allergies

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been made available for research into food allergies and prevention measures in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [58540]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) funds a large research programme on food intolerance and allergy. The aims of the programme are to provide information that will be useful for the development of policy and scientific advice in this area and to look at methods for the identification, assessment and monitoring of allergens in foodstuffs.

Over the past five financial years the FSA has spent the following on research into food allergies and intolerance:

Financial year	*Spend on research (£)*
2004–05	887,285.52
2003–04	838,715.05
2002–03	987,585.33
2001–02	1,647,383.34
2000–01	1,987,656.60

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the system of allergy warnings for food items; what representations she has received on the system; and if she will make a statement. [58542]

Caroline Flint: The Food Labelling (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/2824) which came into force on 26 November 2004 established a list of 12 foods that have to be indicated by reference to the source allergen whenever they, or their derived ingredients, are used in pre-packed foods. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has made no assessment of the effectiveness of the legislation.

Research carried out by the FSA in 2001 and 2002 showed that many consumers did not like the then current system of advisory labelling, often called may contain labelling. Consumers considered that the warnings were overused, that the variety of phrases used was confusing and that the warnings were hard to find and/or read.

Consequently the FSA has set up a multi-stakeholder drafting group to produce best practice guidelines on when it is appropriate to use such labelling. Following a public consultation last year, the guidelines are being amended and are due to be published soon.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking towards implementing an improved system of warnings for consumers who have allergies to *(a)* peanuts and *(b)* milk products; and if she will make a statement. [58543]

Caroline Flint: The Food Labelling (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/2824) which came into force on 26 November 2004 established a list of 12 foods that have to be indicated by reference to the source allergen whenever they, or their derived ingredients, are used in pre-packed foods, whatever the level of use. This list includes peanuts and milk.

In addition to the above, the Food Standards Agency, with the aid of stakeholders, is currently drafting two sets of voluntary guidance for industry. The first is on the handling and labelling of pre-packed foods for accidental allergen cross-contamination (so called 'may contain' labelling) and the second is on the provision of allergen information for foods sold non-prepacked. Both sets of guidance include all 12 of the listed allergens.

Food Labelling

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* regulatory regime and *(b)* labelling requirements apply to the compatibility of mineral supplements for flour with vegetarian dietary requirements. [60255]

Caroline Flint: The Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 require the addition of calcium carbonate, iron, thiamin and nicotinic acid (or nicotinamide) to wheat flour other than wholemeal. The regulations do not specify any particular sources from which these substances must come. Further, the addition of these substances does not need to be indicated on the label.

If a claim is made that any food is suitable for vegetarians or vegans, then all the ingredients should be from appropriate sources. The Food Standards Agency will shortly issue guidance on the use of these terms in food labelling.

Food Supplements Directive

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she expects the European Commission to consult member states about the setting of maximum permitted levels for nutrients in food supplements under the provisions of Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive; and what her objectives are for the outcome of the process; [57495]

(2) what steps she plans to take towards achieving her objectives in the EU in relation to the setting of maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements under the provisions of Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive; when she last discussed these issues with *(a)* officials of the European Commission and *(b)* representatives of other member states; and what the outcome was of those meetings; [57496]

(3) when she next expects to meet representatives of consumers to discuss her strategy for achieving her objectives for the interpretation of Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive; [57497]

(4) what further steps she plans to take to secure the continued presence on the market beyond 2009 of food supplements containing nutrients and nutrient sources which are not included in the list of permitted ingredients set out in the annexes to the Food Supplements Directive; and if she will make a statement; [57498]

(5) what assessment she has made of the implications for the setting of maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements of *(a)* recent developments in the establishment of international standards for such levels by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and *(b)* the recent report of the World Health Organisation Workshop held in Geneva on these issues; [57499]

(6) what assessment she has made of the implications for the setting of maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements under the provisions of the Food Supplements Directive of the outcome of the recent World Trade Organisation case in relation to barriers to trade in genetically modified organisms. [57501]

Caroline Flint: The European Commission has indicated that it will bring forward discussion documents in spring 2006 to consult member states about the setting of maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements. The board of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has considered this issue and proposed a two-tier approach with the use of advisory labelling statements where levels exceed those based on a scientific risk assessment. The objective is for this approach to be promoted in meetings with the European Commission and member states and in discussions on future documents from the Commission for meetings with stakeholders.

Letters have been written to health Ministers in all member states and relevant members of the European Parliament informing them of the approach agreed by the FSA Board. Departmental officials last discussed these issues with the European Commission on 3 March. FSA officials met with officials at the Ministry for Health in the Netherlands on 7 March. Both meetings provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on the United Kingdom's position for setting maximum safe levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements.

Meetings were held with the organisation, Consumers for Health Choice on 15 March and with Which? on 16 March.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will be carrying out the assessment of the dossiers submitted in accordance with the food supplements directive, and is prioritising dossiers for assessment. It is the responsibility of companies who have submitted the dossiers to provide additional information to EFSA. Until EFSA begins its assessment it is unclear as to what the impact on the market beyond 2009 will be. We are continuing to explore with the Commission what further flexibility may be available in the directive after 2009.

Both initiatives by CODEX and the recent report from the World Health Organisation take into account the need for maximum levels to be set based on scientific risk assessment, and this approach underlies the approach proposed by the FSA. A formal assessment of the implications for setting maximum safe levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements following these publications has not been made.

The final outcome of this case from the World Trade Organisation has yet to be published. An assessment of the implications for the setting of maximum levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements following the interim report case in relation to barriers to trade in genetically modified organisms has not therefore been made.

Foundation Trusts

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* role and *(b)* function local authority nominees have on the board of Foundation Trusts. [54895]

Mr. Byrne: The role and function of the board of governors of a national health service foundation trust (NHS FTs), which includes local authority nominees, is to represent the interests of NHS FTs members in the local health economy. Their functions are set out in each NHS FTs constitution and tend to include:

Feed back information about the Trust, its vision and its performance to members;

Chair or attend relevant sub-committees;

Appoint the non-executive directors, including the chair, of the trust;

Appoint the trust's auditor;

Working with the board of directors to produce plans for the future development of the trust;

Receive copies of the trust's annual accounts, auditor's reports and annual reports; and;

If concerns about the performance of the management board cannot be resolved at a local level, informing Monitor (the independent regulator for NHS FTs).

FRANK Campaign

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by her Department on campaigns to raise awareness of the health effects of *(a)* illegal drugs, *(b)* tobacco and *(c)* alcohol in each year since 1997. [47576]

Caroline Flint: The FRANK campaign was launched in May 2003, which is a campaign administered jointly by the Department and the Home Office, and provides young people and their families with information and advice about drugs, including health effects. It is funded by the Home Office and the Department. Joint spending on media and advertising on FRANK is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Spending on media and advertising

	£ million
2003–04	3.7
2004–05	1.9
2005–06[1]	1.4

[1] Planned

Costs for FRANK literature publishing, storage and distribution are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Spending on literature, publishing storage and distribution

	£000
2003–04	368
2004–05	402
2005–06	[1]560

[1] Estimated to end of March 2006

The figures shown in the table above relate to production, storage and distribution of FRANK public-facing literature and collateral. The Home Office funds production of all publications aimed at stakeholders. In addition, the Department funds the FRANK helpline and website.

The Health Education Authority ran the public education campaign on the dangers of smoking prior to 1999–2000. The tobacco control campaign run by the Department was launched in December 1999.

Table 3 shows advertising expenditure on the dangers of smoking from 1999–2000 to date.

Table 3: Advertising expenditure

Financial year	*Tobacco control (£ million)*
1999–2000	6.18
2000–01	8.97
2001–02	7.79
2002–03	7.87
2003–04	17.76
2004–05	25.00
2005–06	23.00

There have been no advertising campaigns by the Department specifically on the dangers of excessive drinking in the last eight years.

The Department has funded the production of a number of booklets or leaflets advising the public on sensible drinking. Expenditure for these is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Expenditure on booklets or leaflets

	Amount (£)
2002–03	96,764
2003–04	44,591
2004–05	[1]39,954

[1] So far

Additionally the Department funds the Drinkline helpline and a dedicated website.

General Practitioners

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner practices have only one general practitioner in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* Lancashire. [58471]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

General practitioner (GP) practices[1] for Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority, as at 30 September 2004

Headcount

		All GP practices	*of which: single-handed*
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	356	107
	Blackburn with Darwen Primary Care Trust (PCT)	33	12
	Blackpool PCT	25	6
	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	42	12
	Carlisle and District PCT	21	7
	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	37	8
	Eden Valley PCT	14	4
	Fylde PCT	10	1
	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	24	12
	Morecambe Bay PCT	56	15
	Preston PCT	30	15
	West Cumbria PCT	21	1
	West Lancashire PCT	25	9
	Wyre PCT	18	5

[1] Figures relate to practitioners, excluding GP registrars and GP retainers, who are single-handed, that is had no partners although their practice may have a GP registrar or GP retainer. This figure cannot be replicated for earlier years.

Source:

General and Personal Medical Services Statistics NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner practices serving the West Lancashire constituency have lists which are open but full. [58579]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Genito-urinary Medicine

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people who were unable to obtain an appointment at a genito-urinary medicine clinic on the day they attended the clinic in the last 12 months. [59485]

Caroline Flint: The genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic waiting times audit collects data on waiting times for all GUM clinics in England for a period of one week every quarter. All patients attending a GUM clinic with a new episode or registering for the first time are asked to complete the short questionnaire on waiting times. This audit has been chosen as the method of monitoring and improving access to GUM services. Current analysis is published on numbers seen within 48 hours. The most recent survey is for November 2005 which shows that 49 per cent. of attendees were seen within 48 hours and a further four per cent. of attendees were offered an appointment within 48 hours but did not attend.

A summary of the data is available on the Health Protection Agency's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/epidemiology/wtimes.htm

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1665W. on genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics, what percentage of attenders at genito-urinary medicine clinics were not given an appointment within two weeks in the November 2005 audit of GUM clinic waiting times by the Health Protection Agency. [57443]

Caroline Flint: The most recent audit of waiting times for genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics for which data are available was carried out in November 2005. This audit showed that 21 per cent. of attendees at GUM clinics were not seen within two weeks. However, some of these patients were offered an earlier appointment but could not attend.

A summary of the November data is available on the Health Protection Agency's website at:

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/epidemiology/results_nov_2005.htm.

Overall, the number of attendees at GUM clinics seen within 48 hours in England increased from 45 per cent. in May 2005 to 49 per cent. in November 2005.

Greater Manchester PCTs

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget surplus or deficit was in each *(a)* primary care trust, *(b)* acute services trust and *(c)* foundation hospital trust in the county of Greater Manchester in each year since 2000. [57832]

Mr. Byrne: The final position of all primary care trusts, national health service trusts and strategic health authorities up to 2004–05 is available in the Library. The 2005–06 forecast position at month six of 2005–06 for all NHS organisations has also been published and is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

The financial position for NHS foundation trusts (NHSFTs) is not included. Monitor has responsibility for overseeing the financial performance of NHSFTs.

Health Budget (Hampshire)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the projected budgetary outturn for 2006–07 is for each *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* trust in Hampshire; what the year end date is in each case; and if she will make a statement. [59063]

Caroline Flint: The financial plans for 2006–07 have not yet been agreed.

Health Provision (Sittingbourne)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions her Department has had with Swale Primary Care Trust on *(a)* the Local Plan with respect to the proposed increase in housing numbers and *(b)* the future development of the Chestnuts Surgery in Sittingbourne. [60532]

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Caroline Flint: The Department has had no recent discussions with Swale Primary Care Trust on either the local plan with respect to the proposed increase in housing numbers or the future development of the Chestnuts Surgery in Sittingbourne. It is for local trusts, in partnership with their health community, to decide on local delivery and planning of services.

Hepatitis C

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment she has made of the health of patients who contracted hepatitis C in the 1970s and 1980s from infected blood. [55742]

Caroline Flint: A study from the Royal Free Hospital published in 2000[1] reported on the natural history of hepatitis C in a cohort of around 300 patients with haemophilia infected between 1961 and 1985.

In April 1995, a lookback exercise was undertaken to identify and trace patients who had received blood before September 1991 (when routine screening of blood donations was introduced) from donors subsequently shown to be positive for hepatitis C. The majority of patients, who were identified from the lookback exercise, form the basis of the National Hepatitis C Register. This includes a record of patients with a known date of acquisition. The National Hepatitis C Register is held by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and funded by the Department. Clinicians are asked to provide follow-up data anonymously for registered patients every two to three years, and the HPA has produced papers on the cohort[2,3]. This study is on-going. Details of the register are available on the HPA website at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hepatitis_c/menu2.htm.

Notes:

[1] Yee TT, Griffioen A., Sabin C.A. et al. The natural history of HCV in a cohort of haemophilia patients infected between 1961 and 1985. *Gut* 2000; 47: 845–851.

[2] Harris H.E., Ramsay R.E., Andrews N. et al. Clinical course of hepatitis C virus during the first decade of infection: cohort study. BMJ 2002; 324: 450–3.

[3] Harris H.E., Ramsay M.E., Andrews N.J. Survival of a national cohort of hepatitis C virus infected patients, 16 years after exposure. *Epidemiol Infect*—in press. [E-pub ahead of print 28 October 2005.]

Home Oxygen Therapy

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 170W, on home oxygen therapy, what assessment she has made of the feasibility of using pharmacists in West Lancashire to supply additional equipment to home oxygen users. [58513]

Mr. Byrne: Pharmacy businesses, like others, were free to submit tenders for the new service contract in the competitive tendering exercise conducted in 2004. No pharmacy business submitted a bid to deliver this service in the north-west region.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answers to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire and the right hon. Member for Warley (Mr. Spellar) of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 464W, on influenza, when the closing date for tenders was; and whether final tenders have been issued. [51860]

Caroline Flint: The formal tendering process for pandemic influenza vaccine began in October last year and must be conducted in compliance with the European Union directive on public procurement. This includes a statutory minimum period of 77 days from when the advertisement is placed in the Official Journal of the European Union to when contracts can be awarded.

The return date for the tenders is Tuesday 21 March, which represents an extension of two weeks to the original date. Manufacturers requested this extension due to the volume of work required to complete the tender documents.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will undertake research to estimate the number of people in each priority group for influenza vaccination in each local authority in England. [51216]

Caroline Flint: Uptake data are collected by primary care trusts on those in the following clinical risk categories:

Chronic respiratory disease, including asthma
Chronic heart disease
Chronic renal disease
Chronic liver disease
Diabetes
Immunosuppression

These uptake data will be published once final data has been collated.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of old age pensioners received an NHS influenza injection in each year since 1997. [52530]

Caroline Flint: The information will be published shortly.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of *(a)* those aged 65 and over and *(b)* those aged over six months suffering from (i) chronic respiratory disease, (ii) chronic heart disease, (iii) chronic renal disease, (iv) chronic liver disease, (v) diabetes and (vi) who are immunosuppressed she estimates have been immunised against winter influenza in 2005. [32073]

Caroline Flint: The data will be published in the Winter Report which is due to be published before the end of March 2006.

Joint Committee on Vaccines

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many meetings of the Joint Committee on Vaccines are planned in 2006; and what vaccines are to be assessed. [59603]

Caroline Flint: The joint committee on vaccination and immunisation has three meetings scheduled for 2006. The first meeting took place on 15 February 2006, further meetings are planned for June and October 2006.

At the February meeting, the following vaccines were discussed: seasonal and pandemic flu vaccines, pertussis vaccines, Hib vaccines, polio, human papillomavirus vaccine, hepatitis b vaccines and pneumococcal vaccine. A paper on rotavirus vaccine was also presented to the committee. The agenda for the other two meetings of the committee have yet to be confirmed.

King Edward VII Hospital

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the value of NHS-funded activity carried out at King Edward VII hospital over the last five years. [59077]

Caroline Flint: The information requested for national health service-funded activity is not collected centrally. However, Capio Healthcare has used the King Edward VII hospital to provide 497 procedures to date as part of the activity delivered to the Southampton area through the independent sector treatment centre programme. The price of these procedures is commercial in confidence.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what average price primary care trusts paid for the five most common procedures funded by the NHS and carried out at the King Edward VII hospital in the last year for which figures are available; and what the equivalent NHS tariff price for each procedure was in each case. [59078]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally. The prices of the procedures undertaken with regard to the independent sector treatment care programme are commercial in confidence.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to which hospitals contracts for NHS work at King Edward VII hospital will be transferred *(a)* in the case of patients booked in for treatment and *(b)* in terms of the average annual case load; and what support her Department will provide to the relevant primary care trust in transferring patients previously booked for appointments at King Edward VII hospital. [59079]

Caroline Flint: Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority advises that patients already booked in for treatment will be treated in line with national standard waiting times. The local national health service believes that although the closure is unexpected, there are sufficiently strong partnerships in place to manage the transition.

Contracts for NHS work at King Edward VII hospital will be transferred to the following NHS trusts:

West Sussex

Royal West Sussex NHS Trust, Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust and Western Sussex PCT

Surrey

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust and Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Hampshire

Southampton University Hospital NHS Trust, Royal Brompton NHS Trust, St. Georges Hospital NHS Trust and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust.

NHS patients who would have received their treatment at the King Edward VII facility under the wave one Independent Sector Treatment Centre programme, will now receive their treatment at the Capio New Hall facility or at Capio's hospital in Reading if they require spinal surgery.

Liver Conditions

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to reduce the number of deaths from liver conditions. [22787]

Caroline Flint: Problematic drinking is a key cause of and contributor to liver disease. We are supporting a comprehensive approach, across and beyond Government, to address the consequences of harm caused by alcohol. The Government have confirmed, by way of the alcohol harm reduction strategy and the Choosing Health White Paper their commitment to tackling this issue.

Hepatitis B and C viruses can also cause serious liver disease. The Department has introduced a range of measures to prevent and control hepatitis B and C infections, including:

Screening of blood donations and viral inactivation of blood products;

Harm reduction services for injecting drug users, including needle and syringe exchanges;

Immunisation against hepatitis B for groups at increased risk of infection;

Services to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including hepatitis B and C;

Infection control procedures in health care settings and

Regulation of tattooing and cosmetic piercing businesses.

The hepatitis C action plan for England sets out a framework of action to improve the prevention, diagnosis of hepatitis C.

Medicines

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many responses have been received to the Medicines (Fees) Regulations consultation; what proportion of these responses objected to the proposed fee increases; and when the results of the consultation will be made public. [53615]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2480–81W.

Mental Health Services (Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase partnership working between mental health trusts and drug and alcohol services in West Lancashire. [58446]

Mr. Byrne: This is the responsibility of the West Lancashire primary care trust in partnership with other local health organisations and patient groups.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on the future role for the independent sector in the provision of mental health facilities in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* West Lancashire constituency. [58447]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service receives vital support from the independent sector in delivering mental health services, improving access to these and in reducing waiting times, for example, in providing medium secure facilities and in specialist eating disorder services and we have no plans to change this.

The independent sector, through the private finance initiative scheme (PFI), is helping to deliver the biggest hospital building programme, including mental health facilities, in the history of the NHS, replacing old and outmoded buildings with ones fit for the 21st century. New or improved mental health facilities are among the 140 new hospital schemes worth £19.1 billion, which are in progress and are counting towards the NHS plan target of having 100 new hospital schemes open by 2010.

The responsibility for planning and developing NHS health services which meet the needs of local communities, including mental health services, rests with primary care trusts and their strategic health authorities. We will continue to support the commissioning of independent sector services by the NHS where this delivers clear benefits for NHS patients and where it represents value for money for the taxpayer.

Midwives

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacant midwife posts there are in *(a)* the Cheshire and Lancashire and Cumbria strategic health authority area and *(b)* the West Lancashire primary care trust area; and what steps her Department is taking to recruit more midwives into the NHS in (i) Cheshire, (ii) Merseyside and (iii) Lancashire. [58453]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

NHS health and social care information centre vacancies survey March 2005, national health service three-month vacancies for Cheshire and Merseyside and Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority areas and by organisations for qualified midwives

Three-month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	Midwives			
	March 2005		*September 2004*	
	Three-month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three-month vacancy (number)*	*Staff in post (full-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Cheshire and Merseyside SHA area total	0.2	2	1,029	1,304
Five Borough Partnership NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Bebington and West Wirral PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Birkenhead and Wallasey PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Central Cheshire PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Central Liverpool PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	[1]—	0	0	0
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Cheshire West PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust	0.9	1	106	138
East Cheshire NHS Trust	0.0	0	70	98
Eastern Cheshire PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Ellesmere Port and Neston PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Halton PCT	0.0	0	28	34
Knowsley PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Liverpool Womens Hospital NHS Trust	0.0	0	277	351
Mersey Care NHS Trust	[2]—	0	3	8
Mersey Regional Ambulance Service NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1.0	1	97	123
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	0.0	0	100	126
North Liverpool PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen Hospitals University NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Royal Liverpool Childrens NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
South Liverpool PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
South Sefton PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Southport and Formby PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	0.0	0	93	116
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust	0.2	0	108	133
St. Helens PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Warrington PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	0.0	0	148	177
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA area Total	0.3	3	927	1,147
Blackburn with Darwen PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Blackpool PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	1.9	2	103	126
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	[2]—	0	1	2
Calderstones NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Carlisle and District PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Chorley and South Ribble PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Cumbria Ambulance Service NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	[2]—	0	1	1
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	0.0	0	245	303
Eden Valley PCT	[1]—	0	0	0

NHS health and social care information centre vacancies survey March 2005, national health service three-month vacancies for Cheshire and Merseyside and Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority areas and by organisations for qualified midwives

Three-month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	Midwives			
	March 2005		*September 2004*	
	Three-month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three-month vacancy (number)*	*Staff in post (full-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Fylde PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Lancashire Care NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	0.7	1	143	177
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	0.0	0	306	356
Morecambe Bay PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	0.0	0	127	182
North Cumbria Mental Health and Learning Disabilities NHS Trust	[1]—	0	0	0
Preston PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
West Cumbria PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
West Lancashire PCT	[1]—	0	0	0
Wyre PCT	[1]—	0	0	0

[1] Zero.

[2] Figures where sum of staff in post (as at 30 September 2004) and vacancies (as at 31 March 2005) is less than 10.

Notes:

Three-month vacancy

1. Three-month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2005.
2. Three-month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole-time equivalents).
3. Three-month vacancy rates are three-month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three-month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Three-month vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the non-medical work force census September 2004.
5. Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place.

Staff in post

Staff in post data is from the non-medical work force census September 2004.

General

1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the aforementioned data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts.
4. SHA figures are based on trusts, and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of health care.

Sources:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005.

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004.

The NHS Improvement Plan, published in June 2004, reiterated the Government's commitment to increase numbers of frontline NHS staff. This built on the NHS Plan which made a commitment to increasing nursing staff numbers—over 20,000 more nurses working in the NHS and 5,500 extra nurses, midwives and health visitors being trained each year by 2004. These targets have already been met and exceeded. The extra investment announced in the 2002 Budget, builds on the NHS Plan target; by 2008 we expect the NHS to have net increases of at least 35,000 nurses, midwives and health visitors.

MRSA (Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA cases there were in each hospital in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* hospitals which receive significant numbers of patients from West Lancashire constituency in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [58455]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, information relating to the national health service hospitals trusts in the Lancashire area is shown in the table.

MRSA cases: Annual data for 2001–05

	April 2001 to March 2002		*April 2002 to March 2003*		*April 2003 to March 2004*		*April 2004 to March 2005*	
Trust name	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*[1]
Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	44	0.22	40	0.11	64	0.17	62	0.16
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	57	0.11	66	0.16	63	0.15	69	0.17
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	76	0.21	58	0.17	56	0.15	74	0.2
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	33	0.1	24	0.08	30	0.1	30	0.1
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	4	0.02	11	0.06	10	0.06	13	0.07

[1] 2004–05 rate per 1,000 bed-days is provisional as final 2004–05 activity data are not yet available.

Source:

Department of Health Mandatory MRSA Bacteraemia Surveillance Scheme —MRSA bacteraemia by NHS trust.

National Blood Service

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding her Department has allocated to the National Blood Service to recruit more bone marrow donors from ethnic minority communities; and if she will make a statement. [57882]

Caroline Flint: NHS blood and transplant is responsible for managing the British bone marrow register (BBMR). It does this through its operating division—the National Blood Service (NBS). The Department has provided NBS with £3.3 million for each of the past three years to help recruit new donors. We are committed to continued improvements to the BBMR so that patients requiring bone marrow are increasingly likely to find a match and we are currently considering future funding.

NHS Finance

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether hospitals who overspend their annual budget are penalised by her Department; and if she will make a statement. [36391]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not impose any penalty on national health service trusts that overspend on their income and expenditure account.

However, in 2005–06 an incentive scheme has been introduced by the NHS Bank, which imposes a 10 per cent. penalty on strategic health authority (SHA) health economy overspends. SHAs have discretion over how they manage this penalty across the organisations in their economy.

While the Department does not impose a penalty on overspending NHS trusts, it does require them to repay the amount overspent. This is essential as it enables the resources to be returned to those organisations that underspent to offset the overspending.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written statement of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 37WS, on NHS finance, what the forecast year end financial position was at month six of each strategic health authority area in total, inclusive of all constituent trusts. [52954]

Jane Kennedy: The strategic health authority (SHA) economy forecast figures for 2005–06 at month six are shown in the table.

SHA economy	*SHA economy surplus/ (deficit) (£000)*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	(80,703)
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	(74,851)
Essex	416
North West London	(94,172)
North Central London	(6,313)
North East London	(583)
South East London	(33,224)
South West London	(18,314)
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	10
County Durham and Tees Valley	0
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	(9,968)
West Yorkshire	0
Cumbria and Lancashire	(2,892)
Greater Manchester	5,000
Cheshire and Merseyside	(43,764)
Thames Valley	(14,850)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	(58,738)
Kent and Medway	(3,768)
Surrey and Sussex	(80,780)
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	(11,000)
South West Peninsula	0
Dorset and Somerset	5,000
South Yorkshire	(10,725)
Trent	705
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	(10,000)
Shropshire and Staffordshire	(49,898)
Birmingham and the Black Country	0
West Midlands South	(29,604)

Source:
2005–06 Monthly Financial Monitoring Returns.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the NHS trusts which inherited deficits at their inception; what the value of the deficits was in each case; and what the current projected financial position is of each trust. [57514]

Jane Kennedy: No national health service trust inherited deficits at its inception. When a new NHS trust is created its income and expenditure reserve and statutory breakeven duty performance are set to nil, therefore the performance of predecessor organisations is not inherited.

However, a new NHS trust may inherit any liabilities arising from local agreements that had been made or incurred by the predecessor organisations. The Department does not collect information on such arrangements.

Nursing Agencies

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms are in place to monitor the services provided by nursing agencies; and if she will make a statement. [57133]

Jane Kennedy: The national audit team for the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency monitor the commercial agencies providing personnel to the national health service via national framework agreements.

Some of the areas audited to ensure the agencies are compliant with the contract are:

Good employment practice;
Immigration statuses;
Immunisation checks;
Professional qualifications;
Training; and
Criminal Records Bureau disclosures.

The above highlights the core criteria and is not an exhaustive list.

Details of the mechanisms in place to monitor agencies contracted direct by NHS trusts outside the frameworks are not collected centrally.

Nutrient Profiling

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on the nutrient profiling model used by the Food Standards Agency when assessing the nutrient content of food. [57557]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have received eight representations on the FSA nutrient profiling model since it was adopted by the FSA board on 6 December 2005; four from food industry representatives and four from individual consumers and organisations representing consumers' interests.

Overseas Medical Staff

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her Department's press release of 7 March 2006 (GNN Ref 129686P), entitled "Extra Investment and Increase in Home-Grown Medical Recruits Eases UK Reliance on Overseas Doctors", what assessment she has made of the impact on the NHS dental service of the enhanced requirements for overseas doctors and dentists to obtain work permits. [58608]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* The enhanced requirements for overseas doctors and dentists to obtain work permits do not have significant implications for national health service dental services. The only implications for dental services are where overseas dentists, from outside the European Union (EU), are seeking employment in the hospital or community dental services and where it will be necessary to show that there is no dentist from the United Kingdom or the wider EU dentist able to fill the post.

The great majority of dentists in England work as independent, self-employed contractors in primary care. In these cases, dentists from outside the EU, who have undertaken vocational training, will continue to be able to seek entry under the "Person Intending to Establish Themselves in Business rules" and are not affected by the enhanced requirements for work permits. A non-EU dentist who has not undertaken vocational training will require a work permit, but vocational dental practitioners are included on the Home Office's list of shortage occupations and will not be affected by the enhanced requirements announced on 7 March.

PET Scanners

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will increase funding to NHS trusts to enable them to meet the costs to patients of travelling to the nearest PET scanner; and if she will make a statement. [55983]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for ensuring that there is provision of ambulance services, which could include patient transport services, to such extent as they consider necessary to meet all reasonable requirements. It is, therefore, for the local national health service to decide who provides patient transport services for eligible patients in their area.

PCTs are also responsible for ensuring that patients who travel to receive their traditional hospital care receive reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses where the patient can prove they require financial assistance.

PCT allocations for 2006–07 will increase by 9.2 per cent. on the previous year. All PCT costs, including both of these schemes, are met from those allocations.

Pneumonia Injection

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of pensioners received a pneumonia injection in 2004–05. [52532]

Caroline Flint: By 31 March 2005, around 81.0 per cent. of people 80 years and over had been vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine.

By 31 March 2005, around 73 per cent. of people 75 years and over had been vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine.

By 31 March 2005, around 48.1 per cent. of people aged 65 years and over had been vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine. It should be noted that up until this date only those 75 years and over had been offered the vaccine routinely.

The policy to vaccinate those aged 65 years and over was introduced on 1 April 2005. Data on the number of people aged 65 years and over who were vaccinated from 1 April 2005 to 1 April 2006 will be collected autumn 2006.

Data on the percentage of people vaccinated between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 by primary care trust has been placed in the Library.

Population Growth

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment her Department has made of the likely impact of the projected increases in the population of South East England from the South East England Regional Assembly housing allocations on *(a)* demand for and *(b)* capacity of (i) primary care and (ii) secondary care; [54571]

(2) what plans she has to review the additional health funding allocated to the Government's identified growth areas for housing development. [54573]

Mr. Byrne: The aim of resource allocation is to provide equal levels of funding for equal levels of underlying need in the population. A key element of the formula used to achieve this objective is the count of the population in an area.

The development of the formula is overseen by the advisory committee on resource allocation (ACRA). ACRA is made up of academics, national health service managers and general practitioners, and already has a work programme to improve the measure of population used to inform primary care trust (PCT) allocations.

The development of the formula is overseen by the Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation (ACRA). ACRA is made up of academics, NHS managers and GPs, and already has a work programme to improve the measure of population used to inform PCT allocations. ACRA will make recommendations in advance of the next allocations round.

The allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 were based on population projections produced by the Office of National Statistics. This includes expected population growth based on previous trends. In addition, a growth area adjustment was introduced for PCTs covered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister growth area initiative. The takes account of the specific impact on population growth. This covers funding for both primary and secondary care.

Results Tariff

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the reasons were for the withdrawal of the national tariff for payment by results; when her Department will indicate what payment by results tariff will apply for financial year 2006–07; and if she will make a statement. [58316]

Mr. Byrne: Regrettably it was necessary to withdraw the tariff for 2006–07 in order to correct underlying errors in the calculation. We are now testing the revised tariff with the help of national health service colleagues, and will publish a corrected version as soon as possible.

Sexual Health

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 446W, on sexual health, if she will place in the Library the review that was undertaken of sexual health service provision in Watford and St. Albans. [60138]

Caroline Flint: The review of the Watford and St. Albans genito-urinary service is currently being drafted and will be sent to the relevant stakeholders for consultation soon. Once this and other elements of the national genito-urinary service review is complete, a report will be published and placed in the House of Commons Library.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the provision of sexual health services in Guildford. [50563]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on Tuesday 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1252W.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the provision of sexual health services in West Lancashire. [58454]

Mr. Byrne: The Department makes financial allocations direct to primary care trusts (PCTs). The responsibility for the provision of these services rests with the national health service at local level. The consideration that PCTs give to this is part of a range of factors that they must take into account in discussions with local health bodies and patient groups in deciding their policy on the provision of treatment services for their locality. This policy will reflect local health needs and priorities.

Social Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which survey the statement in paragraph 5.8 of the white paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" that over a third of those receiving social care had not had a review in the past year was derived. [57653]

Mr. Byrne: The information about the number of social care reviews is derived from referrals, assessments and packages of care data (RAP) for adults in England in 2004–05.

The specific quotation relates to the performance assessment framework (PAF) indicator AO/D40 which shows that 37 per cent. of adults and older clients receiving social services were not reviewed in 2004–05. This percentage is based on the number of reviews for adults aged 18 and over (1.09 million) as a proportion of the total number of people receiving social services aged 18 and over, an estimated 1.72 million.

The final RAP report for 2004–05 was published on 28 February 2006 and is available on the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre's website at:

www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/commcare05adultengrepcssr.

Unborn Babies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has assessed on the extent to which unborn babies are actively learning about the outside world while in the womb. [59356]

Caroline Flint: The Department is aware of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' (RCOG) report, "Fetal Awareness, Report of a Working party" (1997) and the Medical Research Council's "Report of the MRC Expert group on Fetal Pain" (2001).

The RCOG's working party concluded that it is not possible for the fetus to be aware of events before 26 weeks' gestation.

Vaccination Programme

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the annual saving resulting from withdrawal in the UK of the universal TB vaccination programme in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 2006. [50687]

Caroline Flint: Funding for immunisation services including the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination programme, form part of the annual allocation to primary care trusts (PCT). PCTs are responsible for the management of those monies and running of immunisation programmes. As a result of the changes to the BCG vaccination programme, PCTs will redirect monies to reflect how the BCG programme will be implemented within their PCT.

West Lancashire Primary Care Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding for capital expenditure on health services was allotted to West Lancashire primary care trust in each of the past five years; and what percentage of the total funding to the primary care trust in each year those figures represent. [58445]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Mr. Hands: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new-build units of affordable housing have been built in each London borough in each year since 1996–97. [41611]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new affordable homes for social rent have been built in each English local authority since 1990–91; and if he will make a statement. [19739]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of affordable homes provided (new build and acquisitions) for social rent on behalf of each English local authority since 1991–92 has been placed in the Library of the House. The table shows social rented dwellings funded by the Housing Corporation and through local authority social housing grant. Information on local authority built social rent dwellings is shown by region only. Information for the financial year 1990–91 is not available.

Since 1997 substantial additional resources have been made available for refurbishment to the social housing stock alongside new building. Building costs and land costs have also risen. We plan to provide 75,000 social rented properties over the three years 2004–05 to 2007–08. That is an additional 10,000 homes by 2007–08; a 50 per cent. increase on 2004–05. This extra provision will be achieved through a mix of new build and acquisition. In 2005–06 an estimated 20,000 social rented homes will be provided through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme and transitional local authority social housing grant. In addition the Government have provided significant additional resources for shared equity schemes.

Planned annual housing requirements are developed as part of the Regional Spatial Strategies. The Government response to Kate Barker's Review outlined their ambition to increase housing delivery in England over the next decade to 200,000 net additions per year, from current delivery of around 150,000 net additions per year.

Airfields (Planning Policy)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons airfields are no longer exempted but are classified as Brownfield sites under Planning Policy Statement 3. [55373]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southport (Dr. Pugh) on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 67W.

Council Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by how much council expenditure on *(a)* repair and *(b)* administration of council housing has changed on average in each of the last five years. [50822]

Yvette Cooper: Details are shown in the following table:

Financial year	*Supervision and Management per dwelling (£)*	*Change (%)*	*Repairs and Maintenance per dwelling (£)*	*Change (%)*
2000–01	625.57	n/a	739.14	n/a
2001–02	665.18	+6.3	744.10	+0.7
2002–03	739.80	+11.2	738.87	-0.71
2003–04	826.39	+11.7	771.00	+4.35
2004–05	939.57	+13.7	801.42	+3.95

The figures shown in the table were taken from out turn reported in local authorities' second quarterly subsidy claims for the financial year following that referenced. The figures are unaudited, and are collected for guidance only.

County Councils

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research his Department has commissioned into the role of county councils. [59500]

Mr. Woolas: We have not commissioned research into the role of county councils.

EU Programmes (Dorset)

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding Dorset has received from EU programmes over the last three years; from which EU programmes; and how much was received from each. [59576]

Mr. Woolas: Dorset, including the unitary authority areas of Bournemouth and Poole, has received a total of £7.461 million funding in grant paid from EU programmes in the last three calendar years, 2003, 2004 and 2005. The funding is shown, for each programme and calendar year, in the following table. These figures include only Dorset projects and not other region-wide projects or projects that cover more than one county including Dorset for which it is not possible to apportion to administrative areas the grant paid. The figures are for EU grant paid only and do not include UK Government domestic matching funding.

£ million

EU programme	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total 2003–05*
Objective 3	1.198	3.095	1.213	5.506
Leader +	0.216	0.202	0.221	0.639
England Rural Development Programme	0.377	0.399	0.540	1.316

Home Information Packs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what secondary legislation he plans to bring forward in order to introduce home information packs. [59129]

Yvette Cooper: The secondary legislation that we plan to bring forward in order to introduce home information packs will cover:

Home Information Pack components—documents required or authorised to be included in the Home Information Pack.

exceptions from Home Information Pack duties.

Approval of Certification schemes.

Register of Home Condition Reports.

penalty charge for breach of Home Information Pack duties.

commencement of the Home Information Pack duties.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1360W. to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on home information packs, for what reasons his estimate of the annual requirement for home information packs differs from the Regulatory Impact Assessment's estimate of 1.8 million. [59185]

Yvette Cooper: The estimate within the regulatory impact assessment published with the draft Housing Bill was based on industry estimates and our own research into market activity at that time. The more recent estimate of 1.44 million packs being required when the statutory scheme is introduced is based on the current level of sales recorded by the Land Registry.

ODPM will continue working with key stakeholders to ensure that any significant changes in housing market activity are taken into account when estimating the number of HIPs that will be needed and other impacts on industry.

Local Government Structures

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of two-tier local governance arrangements. [59499]

Mr. Woolas: We are currently engaged in a wide ranging debate about local governance, including the future of two-tier arrangements in the shire areas. We intend to finalise our position around the middle of the year at the same time as the publication of the proposed White Paper

Fair Trade Towns

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations his department has received from local authorities on fair trade town status; and if he will make a statement. [55143]

Ian Pearson: I have been asked to reply.

The DTI has not received any representations from local authorities on fair trade town status.

Fire and Rescue Services

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many calls there were to each fire and rescue service in England in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [59387]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of emergency calls to each fire and rescue service in England since 1998–99 is presented in the following table. Information prior to 1998–99 is not held centrally.

	Number of emergency calls						
Fire and rescue service	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[2]
Avon	27,389	32,469	33,450	41,863	39,180	40,252	34,659
Bedfordshire and Luton	14,521	15,566	15,974	17,558	17,459	17,979	20,001
Buckinghamshire	17,875	22,323	21,994	23,691	21,198	23,350	20,174
Cambridgeshire	22,929	24,284	23,677	26,977	25,853	27,406	23,921
Cheshire	22,490	25,014	25,779	29,809	31,102	33,506	29,254
Cleveland	18,432	12,537	22,836	25,132	22,590	25,351	20,081
Cornwall	16,165	13,161	12,860	14,073	14,636	16,194	14,807
County Durham and Darlington	18,156	20,337	19,151	22,188	20,987	21,052	18,965
Cumbria	12,990	14,025	13,298	13,692	13,444	14,710	14,594
Derbyshire	20,371	24,323	20,644	21,295	20,845	21,841	19,279
Devon	20,962	23,427	25,924	30,359	29,738	31,571	30,471
Dorset	13,179	15,824	17,027	20,596	18,862	20,813	15,885
East Sussex	18,817	21.539	23,729	24,136	22,366	24,515	20,106
Essex	37,848	45,915	47,871	50,072	55,700	63,891	42,820
Gloucestershire	22,007	13,631	13,528	13,875	14,031	16,361	14,436
Greater Manchester	87,622	103,525	93,525	97,536	101,348	113,111	88,927
Hampshire	35,072	40,540	40,395	47,887	45,560	51,168	40,195
Hereford and Worcester	26,967	26,678	25.384	22.343	20,773	22,012	17,706
Hertfordshire	28,108	17,919	27,129	28,738	25,680	31,042	21,270
Humberside	27,454	31.286	30,380	35,477	36,512	42,674	28,864
Isle Of Wight	2,045	2,574	2,550	2,631	2,432	2,521	2,078
Isles Of Scilly[3]	—	33	36	—	—	—	—
Kent	39,417	46,018	45,684	46,936	45,768	53,453	42,413
Lancashire	41,932	45,317	45,237	48,960	48,508	53,171	44,383
Leicestershire	19,065	26,766	24,773	26,701	22,604	23,918	19,422
Lincolnshire	12,353	13,805	13.367	14,653	16,457	19,039	17,807
London	248,826	284,578	282,883	306,539	274,938	299,011	266,737
Merseyside	50,317	63,103	64.037	66.577	68,494	72,236	61,459
Norfolk	16,009	17,401	18,845	22,168	22,517	23,227	17.484
North Yorkshire	18,928	18,085	19,671	20,000	11,248	23.704	20,280
Northamptonshire	14,715	16,287	16,354	19,097	20,139	22,903	18,326

Fire and rescue service	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[2]
	Number of emergency calls						
Northumberland	6,262	10,394	10,188	10,795	10.020	12,376	10,439
Nottinghamshire	31,268	38,119	35,366	43,145	45,085	49,190	36,720
Oxfordshire	17,895	20,297	20,312	19,342	21,364	20,076	16,981
Royal Berkshire	14,577	13,666	16,886	17,611	17,180	17,771	14,905
Shropshire	11,399	12,277	12,108	12,140	12,685	13,003	10,198
Somerset	56,890	12,373	14,193	15,453	15,078	14,428	10,117
South Yorkshire	41,000	47,591	n/a	53,908	55,944	66,683	48,249
Staffordshire	29,819	32,908	30,927	34,664	33,065	37,991	31,756
Suffolk	12,017	13,844	15,409	15,991	16,156	17,937	14,030
Surrey	26,249	30,168	30,273	31,745	30,467	34,564	29,735
Tyne and Wear	38,494	44,815	41,342	47,722	44,099	48,431	39,474
Warwickshire	15,044	16,484	14,912	15,573	16,593	18,611	15,228
West Midlands	84,734	100,896	95,623	105,827	104,165	115,045	88,516
West Sussex	20,870	23,148	24,968	21,772	20,788	22,324	19,844
West Yorkshire	52,012	89,648	81,172	90,720	92,853	98,449	88,401
Wiltshire	11,601	13,210	13,305	13,110	13,374	14,258	12,160

n/a = not available.

[1] There were 15 days of industrial action in 2002–03.

[2] Figures for 2004–05 are provisional.

[3] Calls for the Isles of Scilly are included with those for Cornwall except for the years 1999–2000 and 2000–01.

Source:

ODPM annual returns

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* incidents and *(b)* fires were attended by each fire and rescue service in England in each of the last 10 years. [59634]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following tables show data for *(a)* total number of incidents (fires, false alarms and special services), and *(b)* total fires (primary, secondary and chimney), attended by each fire and rescue service in England from 1995–96 to 2004–05.

(a) All incidents attended by each fire and rescue service, England, 1995–96 to 2004–05

FRS area	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*
England	1,085,999	983,496	924,031	837,313	929,601
Avon	18,918	16,907	17,009	16,361	17,840
Bedfordshire	8,700	8,073	7,693	6,952	7,902
Berkshire	14,835	13,643	13,067	12,125	15,348
Buckinghamshire	11,162	10,704	10,426	9,216	10,627
Cambridgeshire	12,482	12,533	12,002	11,549	12,565
Cheshire	18,859	16,428	15,342	13,196	14,757
Cleveland	17,835	16,564	16,053	13,220	15,958
Cornwall	6,807	6,463	6,044	5,485	6,197
Cumbria	9,359	8,509	7,923	7,491	7,898
Derbyshire	17,578	15,242	13,988	13,455	14,542
Devon	17,838	16,256	16,522	15,153	16,863
Dorset	11,764	9,415	10,131	9,086	10,092
Durham	12,776	12,896	12,252	10,565	11,813
East Sussex	12,961	13,383	13,279	12,341	13,667
Essex	25,321	24,406	22,911	20,891	23,875
Gloucestershire	8,233	7,646	7,309	6,918	7,230
Greater London	193,974	190,308	168,425	160,495	175,115
Greater Manchester	82,825	69,793	66,107	56,730	63,891
Hampshire	24,952	22,466	22,582	20,982	22,537
Hereford and Worcester	10,511	9,542	9,291	8,555	9,464
Hertfordshire	15,495	15,486	14,686	13,424	14,120
Humberside	19,273	17,688	18,158	15,905	17,217
Isle of Wight	1,704	1,789	1,832	1,652	1,848
Isles of Scilly	24	40	22	18	33
Kent	25,834	24,951	24,049	22,355	25,256
Lancashire	34,647	29,427	28,345	24,733	27,287
Leicestershire	17,511	15,557	14,239	13,613	14,406
Lincolnshire	7,999	7,513	6,981	6,614	7,315
Merseyside	56,054	48,136	40,590	33,254	39,564
Norfolk	11,294	10,772	9,681	8,617	9,341
North Yorkshire	10,113	9,480	9,589	8,990	9,343
Northamptonshire	10,792	9,795	9,556	9,705	10,040
Northumberland	5,959	5,618	4,956	4,442	5,427

(a) All incidents attended by each fire and rescue service, England, 1995–96 to 2004–05

FRS area	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*
Nottinghamshire	22,297	19,004	17,135	15,697	19,072
Oxfordshire	11,098	10,799	10,307	9,899	10,420
Shropshire	7,387	6,090	6,580	6,339	6,463
Somerset	7,396	7,018	7,000	6,538	7,362
South Yorkshire	31,702	26,492	24,048	22,328	25,629
Staffordshire	18,931	16,082	15,180	13,699	14,780
Suffolk	8,311	8,428	7,825	7,169	7,080
Surrey	17,588	15,141	15,860	14,003	15,656
Tyne and Wear	35,609	33,099	29,182	25,480	28,665
Warwickshire	9,884	8,090	8,219	7,751	7,490
West Midlands	76,397	62,494	62,518	55,212	61,780
West Sussex	14,655	14,483	15,167	13,152	14,137
West Yorkshire	61,468	50,201	45,946	38,297	43,011
Wiltshire	8,885	8,650	8,020	7,659	8,677

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[2]
England	912,741	990,793	951,376	1,016,025	859,800
Avon	18,281	21,679	22,073	21,360	17,628
Bedfordshire	8,159	9,180	8,797	9,414	7,413
Berkshire	13,686	14,390	13,377	14,398	12,121
Buckinghamshire	10,273	11,081	10,152	10,999	9,791
Cambridgeshire	12,609	14,022	12,810	13,039	11,710
Cheshire	14,673	16,912	16,998	17,543	15,242
Cleveland	15,318	16,833	16,267	15,594	13,063
Cornwall	6,216	6,271	6,422	6,203	5,946
Cumbria	7,867	7,882	7,816	8,340	7,567
Derbyshire	13,909	14,403	14,243	14,773	12,428
Devon	17,215	18,097	17,223	18,308	17,374
Dorset	10,325	11,159	9,967	10,282	9,294
Durham	10,813	12,310	11,670	11,723	10,421
East Sussex	14,101	14,660	13,687	14,648	12,932
Essex	25,345	27,088	25,541	27,946	23,265
Gloucestershire	7,283	7,657	7,697	8,850	8,402
Greater London	176,289	185,625	167,639	181,642	158,756
Greater Manchester	59,507	65,781	63,005	64,240	54,052
Hampshire	22,821	26,118	24,287	27,138	22,389
Hereford and Worcester	9,148	10,163	9,775	10,785	9,016
Hertfordshire	13,599	14,861	13,984	14,941	12,000
Humberside	16,717	19,325	19,418	22,064	17,330
Isle of Wight	1,959	1,977	1,769	1,891	1,643
Isles of Scilly	34	36	42	35	26
Kent	25,552	26,315	25,381	28,916	23,325
Lancashire	26,833	28,737	28,683	30,907	26,518
Leicestershire	13,617	15,107	14,858	15,236	13,078
Lincolnshire	7,139	7,861	9,697	11,420	11,197
Merseyside	36,760	37,743	38,451	42,804	34,603
Norfolk	9,452	10,999	10,916	11,095	9,610
North Yorkshire	10,920	10,392	10,439	10,722	10,347
Northamptonshire	9,956	10,893	11,337	12,382	10,537
Northumberland	5,068	5,831	5,194	6,126	4,996
Nottinghamshire	17,352	20,892	21,859	23,476	18,482
Oxfordshire	10,139	10,125	9,033	6,957	16,451
Shropshire	6,676	7,125	6,976	7,008	5,880
Somerset	7,733	8,022	7,613	7,648	6,069
South Yorkshire	23,501	27,992	28,422	30,619	23,217
Staffordshire	14,315	16,128	16,025	18,233	15,249
Suffolk	8,163	8,824	8,706	9,366	7,803
Surrey	15,409	15,864	15,333	17,255	15,113
Tyne and Wear	25,975	29,537	27,916	29,533	23,773
Warwickshire	7,905	7,966	8,335	9,012	7,864
West Midlands	57,972	62,785	60,369	65,635	52,219

	2000-01	*2001-02*	*2002-03*[1]	*2003-04*	*2004-05*[2]
West Sussex	15,253	13,954	13,351	14,100	12,662
West Yorkshire	42,224	51,773	49,620	52,929	43,810
Wiltshire	8,678	8,418	8,202	8,488	7,188

[1] There were 15 days of industrial action in 2002–03.

[2] Provisional.

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service annual returns and FDR returns to ODPM.

(b) All fires attended by each fire and rescue service, England, 1995–96 to 2004–05

FRS area	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*
England	487,625	414,035	362,254	315,692	386,027
Avon	8,446	6,673	6,023	5,892	7,281
Bedfordshire	4,270	3,712	3,342	2,817	3,538
Berkshire	5,822	4,720	4,123	3,841	4,811
Buckinghamshire	5,535	4,867	4,679	3,898	4,945
Cambridgeshire	4,569	4,571	3,823	3,503	4,171
Cheshire	10,413	8,839	7,363	5,996	7,330
Cleveland	9,505	8,134	7,340	5,892	8,364
Cornwall	3,679	3,338	2,768	2,340	2,699
Cumbria	4,668	4,231	3,482	3,065	3,679
Derbyshire	7,910	6,156	5,051	4,562	5,452
Devon	8,024	6,859	6,258	5,766	6,519
Dorset	4,843	3,698	3,674	3,163	3,628
Durham	7,128	7,185	6,557	5,357	6,667
East Sussex	4,772	4,653	4,176	4,054	5,021
Essex	11,004	10,008	8,464	7,357	9,200
Gloucestershire	3,675	3,285	2,796	2,667	2,907
Greater London	56,133	52,654	46,405	40,952	49,400
Greater Manchester	43,424	33,010	29,903	24,700	31,326
Hampshire	12,333	9,861	9,323	8,123	9,586
Hereford and Worcester	4,748	4,439	3,986	3,343	3,968
Hertfordshire	6,072	5,872	5,398	4,550	5,579
Humberside	10,866	9,588	8,870	7,770	8,992
Isle of Wight	790	754	723	657	676
Isles of Scilly	15	29	11	10	7
Kent	11,390	10,920	9,756	8,839	10,730
Lancashire	16,564	14,243	12,746	10,816	12,981
Leicestershire	7,705	6,350	5,131	5,059	5,828
Lincolnshire	4,040	3,568	2,997	2,988	3,559
Merseyside	32,925	25,635	21,421	17,271	22,616
Norfolk	5,059	5,141	4,089	3,532	3,838
North Yorkshire	4,259	3,679	3,247	2,950	3,501
Northamptonshire	5,470	4,821	4,449	4,289	4,688
Northumberland	3,053	3,065	2,448	2,096	2,863
Nottinghamshire	12,058	9,357	7,298	6,689	9,255
Oxfordshire	3,953	3,781	3,241	2,950	3,163
Shropshire	3,823	3,047	2,907	2,610	3,171
Somerset	3,162	2,923	2,600	2,353	2,795
South Yorkshire	17,993	14,184	11,301	10,741	13,300
Staffordshire	10,635	8,107	6,876	6,171	7,402
Suffolk	3,788	3,581	3,014	2,536	2,844
Surrey	5,488	4,797	4,465	3,668	4,522
Tyne and Wear	19,450	18,012	15,118	13,005	16,304
Warwickshire	4,570	3,599	3,253	2,597	3,154
West Midlands	34,465	28,133	25,317	20,923	25,822
West Sussex	4,602	4,135	3,818	3,479	3,969
West Yorkshire	31,569	22,875	19,771	17,536	21,462
Wiltshire	2,958	2,950	2,449	2,317	2,513

	2000-01	*2001-02*	*2002-031*	*2003-04*	*2004-052*
England	359,259	431,838	412,491	473,563	341,258
Avon	7,265	9,344	9,149	9,628	6,749
Bedfordshire	3,533	4,142	4,191	4,777	3,387
Berkshire	4,668	5,223	4,579	5,612	3,919
Buckinghamshire	4,413	5,110	4,445	5,508	4,170
Cambridgeshire	3,971	4,482	4,472	5,283	3,964

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03[1]	2003–04	2004–05[2]
Cheshire	6,994	9,144	9,070	9,937	8,033
Cleveland	7,862	9,549	9,363	9,777	7,105
Cornwall	2,504	2,734	2,709	2,547	2,396
Cumbria	3,596	3,618	3,655	4,358	3,472
Derbyshire	4,799	5,710	5,824	6,358	4,546
Devon	5,911	6,823	6,058	6,654	5,768
Dorset	3,845	4,559	3,700	4,176	3,323
Durham	5,464	6,939	6,364	6,964	5,378
East Sussex	4,629	5,352	4,577	5,360	4,038
Essex	9,202	10,829	9,568	12,179	8,438
Gloucestershire	2,775	3,022	3,093	3,938	2,943
Greater London	47,573	55,642	46,807	57,256	39,959
Greater Manchester	29,062	34,497	33,292	34,827	26,122
Hampshire	8,825	12,024	10,160	12,836	8,794
Hereford and Worcester	3,616	4,400	4,063	4,836	3,272
Hertfordshire	5,151	5,864	5,649	7,361	4,954
Humberside	8,158	10,577	10,912	13,483	9,128
Isle of Wight	575	742	591	695	520
Isles of Scilly	15	15	21	20	14
Kent	9,919	11,229	10,965	13,740	9,949
Lancashire	12,476	14,349	14,454	16,015	11,620
Leicestershire	5,132	6,291	5,808	6,757	4,580
Lincolnshire	2,971	3,517	3,604	4,240	3,241
Merseyside	20,581	23,348	24,399	26,808	19,555
Norfolk	3,819	4,561	4,499	4,872	3,685
North Yorkshire	3,486	3,919	3,790	4,214	3,257
Northamptonshire	4,581	5,546	5,712	6,640	4,742
Northumberland	2,525	3,081	2,828	3,520	2,406
Nottinghamshire	7,833	11,222	12,141	13,765	8,939
Oxfordshire	3,190	3,265	3,159	3,455	2,826
Shropshire	2,867	3,469	3,394	3,619	2,715
Somerset	2,698	3,179	3,131	3,286	2,474
South Yorkshire	11,494	15,197	16,405	18,601	12,780
Staffordshire	6,433	7,873	7,940	9,302	6,624
Suffolk	2,845	3,216	3,175	4,048	3,011
Surrey	4,012	4,782	4,631	5,926	4,516
Tyne and Wear	14,026	17,349	16,582	17,552	12,948
Warwickshire	3,009	3,278	3,545	4,048	2,971
West Midlands	24,118	28,242	27,603	32,711	21,835
West Sussex	3,672	4,368	3,828	4,762	3,587
West Yorkshire	20,622	27,423	25,944	28,255	20,234
Wiltshire	2,542	2,793	2,641	3,055	2,371

[1] The strike period of 15 days is excluded from the 2002–03 figures.

[2] Provisional.

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service FDR returns to ODPM.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many firefighters were injured in operational incidents in the fire and rescue services in England in each of the last 10 years. [59643]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of firefighters that were injured in operational incidents in fire and rescue services in England since 1998–99 is tabled as follows. Information prior to 1998–99 is not held centrally.

	Number of firefighters injured at operational incidents						
Fire and rescue service	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[2]
Avon	55	80	92	85	131	94	46
Bedfordshire and Luton	61	44	43	28	33	7	31
Buckinghamshire	37	27	24	24	10	21	15
Cambridgeshire	69	64	44	46	35	48	33
Cheshire	49	46	49	39	48	59	58
Cleveland	25	37	29	n/a	32	43	29
Cornwall	17	33	40	27	33	31	28
County Durham and Darlington	41	41	31	32	53	33	28
Cumbria	40	43	61	41	43	36	40
Derbyshire	85	58	71	46	49	35	63
Devon	68	78	109	52	50	65	41
Dorset	43	47	47	79	43	65	52
East Sussex	35	51	26	57	47	86	55
Essex	67	92	103	89	62	102	67
Gloucestershire	31	25	49	45	40	44	36
Greater Manchester	232	293	261	219	184	188	176

	Number of firefighters injured at operational incidents						
Fire and rescue service	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[2]
Hampshire	50	76	81	50	50	80	38
Hereford and Worcester	29	14	34	29	38	43	50
Hertfordshire	35	57	51	42	62	135	73
Humberside	63	90	57	91	81	58	62
Isle of Wight	7	22	6	16	16	6	4
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Kent	92	97	79	81	60	104	88
Lancashire	42	61	76	n/a	62	59	67
Leicestershire	50	35	47	36	41	39	13
Lincolnshire	33	15	22	27	18	18	19
London	4[illegible]1	448	486	388	387	413	244
Merseyside	79	112	74	61	83	90	133
Norfolk	41	65	40	56	47	64	34
North Yorkshire	39	37	34	28	32	39	24
Northamptonshire	37	30	44	47	55	52	63
Northumberland	20	19	24	19	14	20	19
Nottinghamshire	65	69	62	75	96	67	n/a
Oxfordshire	53	45	39	61	22	36	13
Royal Berkshire	60	64	69	31	34	47	19
Shropshire	28	22	16	28	26	27	15
Somerset	48	24	24	60	33	60	16
South Yorkshire	47	65	66	85	86	74	55
Staffordshire	55	75	113	54	62	64	87
Suffolk	65	78	61	49	65	63	[illegible]6
Surrey	91	49	54	54	110	233	84
Tyne and Wear	103	110	95	96	99	95	46
Warwickshire	28	32	27	22	17	52	30
West Midlands	140	135	140	146	156	228	219
West Sussex	52	51	63	45	27	42	25
West Yorkshire	101	141	121	144	111	123	100
Wiltshire	26	18	21	31	25	32	17
Total	2,965	3,215	3,205	2,861	2,909	3,420	2,471

n/a = information not available

[1] In 2002–03 there was a period of industrial action which lasted for 15 days.

[2] The figures for 2004–05 are provisional.

Source:
ODPM annual returns

Fire-related Deaths

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many deaths there were in dwelling fires in each fire and rescue services area in England in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [59386]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table shows the data for each fire and rescue service in England in each of the last 10 years.

Fatal casualties in dwelling fires in each fire and rescue service area, England, 1995–2004

FRS area	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]	*2004*
England	428	428	432	383	334	351	358	327	350	269
England—non-met counties	236	238	250	202	174	189	188	192	181	137
Avon	2	3	4	4	8	5	6	6	6	3
Bedfordshire	4	6	3	4	1	5	3	4	5	2
Berkshire	3	12	5	7	3	7	4	1	6	2
Buckinghamshire	4	4	7	2	4	6	3	6	4	1
Cambridgeshire	3	9	4	2	3	3	2	1	2	3
Cheshire	6	8	11	7	8	6	7	5	4	1
Cleveland	7	5	10	2	3	1	5	2	8	2
Cornwall	6	1	6	3	3	4	4	4	3	3
Cumbria	10	3	4	5	3	3	5	3	3	3
Derbyshire	6	5	7	8	7	10	5	10	11	6
Devon	5	6	4	6	4	7	3	4	6	1
Dorset	10	8	5	1	8	2	8	6	1	3
Durham	6	3	9	4	9	7	5	3	8	4
East Sussex	6	7	7	8	5	3	3	4	6	4
Essex	11	13	14	6	6	10	6	7	8	6
Gloucestershire	7	5	4	2	1	2	1	2	5	1
Hampshire	14	15	5	8	9	8	7	5	5	7
Hereford and Worcester	2	1	6	4	3	2	2	4	4	2

Fatal casualties in dwelling fires in each fire and rescue service area, England, 1995–2004

FRS area	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]	*2004*
Hertfordshire	6	10	10	7	4	6	5	6	0	0
Humberside	18	8	7	10	5	7	7	7	7	7
Isle of Wight	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Kent	12	12	7	5	5	9	11	9	9	5
Lancashire	21	19	22	15	15	17	14	26	13	15
Leicestershire	9	10	4	9	3	1	5	7	4	9
Lincolnshire	6	4	2	7	3	4	4	6	4	4
Norfolk	2	2	5	1	5	9	6	2	4	3
North Yorkshire	5	7	7	8	4	2	4	5	5	2
Northamptonshire	4	3	8	8	5	3	3	3	3	3
Northumberland	3	0	3	1	2	1	6	0	3	0
Nottinghamshire	4	11	16	10	8	3	6	6	4	5
Oxfordshire	4	10	4	8	5	1	3	6	4	2
Shropshire	1	1	3	0	1	8	2	4	1	1
Somerset	3	5	4	1	0	1	5	5	4	2
Staffordshire	8	7	10	8	7	8	7	5	3	6
Suffolk	9	0	6	6	1	3	5	4	4	2
Surrey	2	4	[illegible]	6	3	7	2	4	7	2
Warwickshire	1	1	2	4	2	5	6	0	1	2
West Sussex	1	2	5	4	7	3	2	4	4	12
Wiltshire	3	7	4	0	1	0	4	6	2	1
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
England—met counties	192	190	182	181	160	162	170	135	169	132
Greater Manchester	27	24	29	24	29	23	27	17	29	17
Merseyside	15	19	10	21	8	22	15	11	10	13
South Yorkshire	8	11	6	12	11	12	18	5	13	12
Tyne and Wear	6	12	5	16	5	5	7	5	8	4
West Midlands	26	19	16	19	22	30	23	20	17	17
West Yorkshire	29	35	24	23	20	22	12	21	25	23
Greater London	81	70	92	66	65	48	68	56	67	46

[1] Includes fatal casualties recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Homelessness

Mr. Leech: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are classed as homeless in *(a)* Manchester and *(b)* Withington constituency. [58869]

Yvette Cooper: Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected in respect of households, rather than persons, and at local authority rather than constituency level.

This is summarised in a quarterly Statistical Release, the latest of which was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 13 March. A supplementary table presents key information at local authority level, including outcomes of all decisions made between 1 October and 31 December 2005, and numbers in temporary accommodation on 31 December 2005. Copies are available in the House of Commons Library, and from the ODPM website at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/
index.asp?id: = 1002882&PressNoticeID = 2095

The duty owed to a person accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need is to secure suitable accommodation. If a settled home is not immediately available, the authority may secure temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. As an alternative to the provision of temporary accommodation some authorities arrange for households to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Information is also collected separately by the department on the number of people who sleep rough, that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night. In April 2005 Manchester City Council carried out a count of rough sleepers and counted 7 persons sleeping rough. No information is available at constituency level and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Ordnance Survey has made of the implications of the EU's plans for Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE). [59121]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Defra is the UK Policy Lead department on INSPIRE. Defra has completed the partial Regulatory Impact Assessment covering the benefits and cost to UK. This Regulatory Impact Assessment accompanied a supplementary explanatory memorandum sent to the appropriate Scrutiny Committees on 26 May 2005.

Local Government Staff

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the average salaries of *(a)* male and *(b)* female employees in local government. [60016]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 21 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the average salaries of *(a)* male and *(b)* female employees in local government. (60016)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach a table showing Average Gross Weekly Earnings by male and female for the year 2005. Employees in local government have been defined as those employed by an organisation with legal status 6 (local authority) on the Inter-departmental Business Register.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent. sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

2005 Gross weekly (£) pay for full time local government employee jobs[1] by gender

	Median	Mean
Male	543.6	574.7
Female	457.7	483.2

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

Note:

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Oil-Fired Technical Association

Graham Stringer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for the formal review of the Oil-Fired Technical Association prior to its registration. [57376]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[pursuant to the answer given on 16 February 2006, Official Report, column 2243W]:* The next review of the scheme will be in the context of its seeking accreditation from the United Kingdom Advisory Service, which must be achieved by 1 April 2008 at the latest.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to answer question 19739 tabled by the hon. Member for Yeovil on 18 October 2005. [40644]

Yvette Cooper: I have answered the hon. Member's question today. I apologise for the delay in replying.

Planning (Disused Airfields)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what factors led to the change of planning guidance on the use of disused airports for the building of domestic units. [55019]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 67W.

Planning Regulations

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government has made to planning regulations to development on *(a)* current and *(b)* former airfields since 1997. [56090]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has published no regulations relating to the development of current or former airfields since 1997.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13), published in 2001, built on the policy set out in the previous PPG13 published in 1994, stating that local authorities should avoid at or close to an airport or airfield development that would be incompatible with any existing or potential aviation operations.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3), published in 2000, and draft Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3), published for consultation in December 2005, proposed no policy change in relation to the development for housing of current or former airfield sites. PPG3 set out the definition of previously-developed land for the purposes for planning for housing, derived from urban land uses based on the Land Use Change Statistics classification introduced in 1985 but not previously articulated in planning guidance. The proposed changes to PPG3 reflected in Annex A of draft PPS3 on definitions are not intended to affect the application of the definition of previously-developed land to current or former airfields.

Social Housing

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* social housing units and *(b)* units of shared equity housing have been made available in West Lancashire in each year since 1980. [51121]

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many social housing units have been made available in Merton in each year since 1980. [50051]

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of social housing have been made available in Hartlepool in each year since 1980. [47323]

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new-build units of affordable housing have been built in *(a)* Gravesham and *(b)* Kent in each year since 1996–97. [43277]

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of social housing have been completed in Oxford City in each of the last 10 years. [58285]

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* social housing units and *(b)* units of shared equity housing have been made available in each London borough in each year since 1990. [52298]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of affordable homes provided (new build and acquisitions) for social rent on behalf of each English local authority since 1991–92 has been placed in the Library of the House. The table shows social rented dwellings funded by the Housing Corporation and through Local Authority Social Housing Grant. Information on local authority built social rent dwellings is shown by region only. Information for the financial year 1990–91 is not available.

Since 1997 substantial additional resources have been made available for refurbishment to the social housing stock alongside new building. Building costs and land costs have also risen. We plan to provide 75,000 social rented properties over the three years 2004–05 to 2007–08. That is an additional 10,000 homes by 2007–08; a 50 per cent. increase on 2004–05. This extra provision will be achieved through a mix of new build and acquisition. In 2005/06 an estimated 20,000 social rented home will be provided through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme and Transitional local Authority Social Housing Grant. In addition the Government have provided significant additional resources for shared equity schemes.

Planned annual housing requirements are developed as part of the Regional Spatial Strategies. The Government response to Kate Barker's Review outlined their ambition to increase housing delivery in England over the next decade to 200,000 net additions per year, from current delivery of around 150,000 net additions per year.

Town Twinning

Tony Baldry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his department provides support for town twinning initiatives. [59261]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sponsors the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) through the top-sliced Revenue Support Grant. The LGIB supports and co-ordinates town-twinning on behalf of local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Travelator

Mr. Leech: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department has taken to enforce the planning condition which required construction of a travelator between the two Stratford stations. [58870]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Responsibility for enforcing the planning condition requiring the construction of a fully enclosed pedestrian link such as a travelator or similar mode of conveying people between the international and regional stations at Stratford lies with Newham council as local planning authority. If the scheme's promoters, Union Railways, wish to seek the removal or variation of the condition, they would need to apply to Newham council. Should Newham council refuse the application, there would be the usual right of appeal to the First Secretary of State of State.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

"Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice"

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many copies of the consultation paper "Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice" were distributed by her Department; if she will list those who were sent copies; and if she will make a statement. [59465]

Ms Harman: 491 copies of the consultation paper and draft Code of Practice have so far been sent to private individuals and professional organisations and associations in the healthcare, welfare and voluntary sectors. A detailed list of these organisations can be found at the front of the consultation paper on the Mental Capacity Act draft Code of Practice. We anticipate further copies being sent out as the consultation period progresses.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent by her Department on producing the consultation paper "Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice"; and if she will make a statement. [59466]

Ms Harman: We have therefore produced copies of the draft code of practice and the accompanying consultation paper in English, Welsh versions, as well as producing Easy Read information on the draft code. We have also produced audio versions of this Easy Read information. The total cost for this was £44,000.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions her Department has had with organisations known by her Department to be opposed to the Mental Capacity Act 2005; and if she will make a statement. [59467]

Ms Harman: Ministers and officials have had meetings and contact with a wide range of organisations since the Mental Capacity Act 2005 received Royal Assent. These organisations have a variety of opinions on different sections of the Act. We will continue to agree to requests for meetings in the future.

Adoption and Children Act 2002

Annette Brooke: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what measures she has put in place to ensure that the implementation date for section 122 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 is met; and if she will make a statement; [56568]

(2) when section 122 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 will be implemented; and if she will make a statement; [56569]

(3) what are the reasons for the delay in the implementation of section 122 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; and if she will make a statement; [56913]

(4) what discussions she has had with *(a)* other Government Departments and *(b)* interested parties on the implementation of section 122 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; and if she will make a statement; [56914]

(5) whether she plans to take alternative measures before section 122 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 is brought into force; and if she will make a statement. [60283]

Ms Harman: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement of 11 January 2006, *House of Lords Official Report*, column WS11, by Baroness Ashton of Upholland: Subsection 1*(a)* of section 122 of the Adoption and Children Act came into force on 30 December 2005. The date for implementation of rules under section 122, subsections 1*(b)* and 2, has not been decided. There have been no discussions with other Government Departments and interested parties at ministerial level. However, a period of consultation will take place prior to implementation. In the meantime, existing provisions for the representation of children remain in force.

Court Bailiffs

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the number of court bailiffs covering *(a)* the Central London County Court jurisdiction and *(b)* England and Wales; and if she will make a statement. [59282]

Ms Harman: The responsibility for ensuring adequate resources are made available for civil enforcement by the county courts rests with Her Majesty's Court Service but I am satisfied that sufficient bailiff numbers are in place both in relation to London and nationally.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the costs to business of delays in the court bailiff service *(a)* in the Central London County Court jurisdiction and *(b)* in England and Wales; and if she will make a statement. [59284]

Ms Harman: The responsibility for ensuring the service provided by court bailiff teams rests with Her Majesty's Courts Service and current performance is meeting agreed targets.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the extent of the waiting list is for court bailiff action in *(a)* the Central London County Court jurisdiction and *(b)* England and Wales. [59285]

Ms Harman: Information about the extent of the waiting list for court bailiff action in *(a)* the Central London County Court jurisdiction and *(b)* England and Wales, is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what funding has been allocated for 2005–06 to the court bailiff service in *(a)* the Central London County Court and *(b)* England and Wales. [59286]

Ms Harman: The information is as follows:

(a) The budget allocated in respect of court bailiff services to Central London County Court for 2005–06, was £202,000.

(b) The budget allocated in respect of court bailiff services to the civil courts across the whole of England and Wales for 2005–06, was £16.4 million.

Drug Courts

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what initial assessment has been made of the drug court pilots launched in December 2005; if she will make a statement [59323]

Ms Harman: After the launch of the Dedicated Drug Courts (DDC) pilots at Leeds and West London magistrates courts in December 2005, the project team is working closely with the judiciary, court staff and partner agencies to ensure successful implementation of the processes at the courts.

The impact of the DDC can only be demonstrated, however, in the longer term and therefore an evaluation will not be completed until July 2007. These findings will be used to inform decisions about the potential for future roll out to other courts in England and Wales.

Electoral Fraud

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Government plan to take to ensure prosecutions are brought for electoral fraud. [58095]

Bridget Prentice: Decisions on prosecutions are for the Crown Prosecution Service to make.

The Electoral Administration Bill will introduce a number of measures that will strengthen the current offences under electoral law, and create new offences. For example, it will create a new offence of falsely applying for a postal vote, and strengthens the offence of undue influence.

Electoral Reform

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what *(a)* changes to past electoral practices, *(b)* pilots and *(c)* new rules on electoral fraud she expects to be ratified in (i) primary and (ii) secondary legislation and operational for the May 2006 local elections. [56085]

Bridget Prentice: The information is as follows.

(a) The Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament contains a number of measures that affect electoral practices and address electoral fraud. The Bill will not be in force before the May 2006 local elections. The Local Elections (Principal Areas and Parishes and Communities) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 change the hours of polling at local, parish and community council elections from 8 am to 9 pm to 7 am to 10 pm. The rules were made on 16 February and will come into force on 24 March, and will apply at the May 2006 local elections.

(b) A number of local authorities are piloting at the May 2006 local elections provisions included in the Electoral Administration Bill. These include:

the use of ballot papers without counterfoils;

the use of a postal voting statement for postal votes signed only by the elector, instead of the traditional declaration of identity;

a marked register of returned postal votes to be made available after the close of poll; and

the signing for ballot papers at polling stations.

(c) The Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 contain a range of measures that improve access to the electoral process and the security of postal voting. They were made on 9 March and will come into force on 23 March, and will apply at the May 2006 local elections. The provisions that prevent postal vote fraud are:

electoral administrators will be required to confirm in writing the outcome of postal vote applications;

postal voters will have to give a reason for the re-direction of their postal vote;

the closing date for postal vote applications will be moved from 6 to 11 days before polling day to give administrators more time to check applications;

electoral administrators may check signatures on postal vote applications against any other signatures they may hold.

(The 10 new measures in the Electoral Administration Bill that tackle electoral fraud and will come into affect after the Bill receives Royal Assent are:

there will be a new offence of falsely applying for a postal or proxy vote;

there will be new secrecy warnings on postal and proxy voting papers to deter any attempt unlawfully to influence another person's vote;

ballot papers will have a security mark and a barcode to enable quick security checks for stolen postal votes;

after every election a list of all those who voted by post will be published which will enable individuals to check that their vote was counted. And in an investigation the police will be able to check up with any individual whether they did actually vote by post or whether their vote was stolen;

there will be a new criminal offence of supplying false information or failing to supply information to the electoral registration officer at any time;

there will be a new, strengthened offence of undue influence which will make it easier to prosecute, even if the undue influence does not effect the way someone votes;

the police will be given more time to carry out investigations into electoral fraud—increased from one to two years;

voters will have to sign for their ballot paper at the polling station to deter fraudsters and allow signatures to be checked if there is suspicion of fraud;

electoral administrators will have clear new powers to cross check applications to register to vote against other information the council holds—to check whether the person trying to register does actually exist and live at that address;

there will be a pilot programme to try out a new system of making people sign and give their date of birth before they get on the electoral register.)

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to increase energy efficiency within her Department; and if she will make a statement. [60338]

Bridget Prentice: My Department is fully committed to reducing carbon emissions and is signed up to the Government's Energy White Paper which sets targets of reducing absolute carbon from fuel and energy efficiency used in buildings on their estate by 12.5 per cent. by 2010–11 relative to 1999–2000. My Department also fully recognises the need for Government Departments to show leadership on energy efficiency.

In an effort to promote this work, my Department has invested £1 million in energy saving works over the last 12 months. Works undertaken include surveying our recently transferred magistrates court buildings. This has identified key energy saving works which, when implemented at low or no cost will contribute to the Department's energy savings. In addition, old energy inefficient equipment is being replaced. All sites on the estate are monitored on a monthly basis for energy usage.

The Department has recently joined the OGC utilities contract and all the Department's smaller sites are receiving 'green' electricity.

European Employment Practices

Mr. Chope: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what action she is taking to ensure that English notaries are able to practise in other European countries. [58605]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* I have been asked to reply.

The Government have supported the inclusion of notary services within the European Commission's proposal for a directive on services in the internal market. However, in its first reading of the directive the European Parliament has proposed excluding those exercising official authority from the scope of the directive, and specifically identifies notaries as an example. This would have the effect of excluding notaries from the scope of the directive. Discussions on the scope of the directive are continuing.

The UK SOLVIT Centre in DTI, which helps businesses and citizens enforce their EU cross-border rights, is also taking forward a case on behalf of an English notary.

Legal Advice

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 9 March 2006 to the hon. Member for Wirral, South, what assessment she has made of the likely effect on the quality of front-line advice of the decision to withdraw access to specialist and complex legal advice. [59575]

Ms Harman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State (Bridget Prentice) to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Keith Vaz) on 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2145W.

Middlesex Guildhall

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1579W, on Middlesex Guildhall, whether she has asked officials in her Department to make alternative plans for the site of the new Supreme Court; and if she will make a statement. [59574]

Ms Harman: Middlesex Guildhall has been identified as the best location for a Supreme Court for the United Kingdom. The Department has undertaken the required planning and consultation to ensure the Supreme Court can be established at Middlesex Guildhall.

Sentencing Guidelines

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what sentencing guidelines she issues to magistrates and judges; what circumstances she takes into account when drawing up such guidance; what compulsion there is for magistrates and judges to follow these guidelines; and if she will make a statement. [59892]

Ms Harman: Responsibility for issuing sentencing guidelines lies with the Sentencing Guidelines Council, which was created by section 167 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Section 172 of that Act places a duty on the court to have regard to any sentencing guidelines that have been issued by the Sentencing Guidelines Council.

The Government do not issue sentencing guidelines to judges and magistrates.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29055]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Information on whether departmental projects are conducted by consultants or Home Office staff is not held centrally and to obtain this information would incur disproportionate cost.

The information held by the Home Office on its spending on consultants is as follows:

	£
2000–01	27,877,286
2001–02	21,147,058
2002–03	[1]—
2003–04	106,800,000
2004–05	46,900,000

[1] Not held

We do not hold information on the Department's total expenditure on consultants for 2002–03 and to obtain this information would incur disproportionate cost.

The best information available for the financial year 2003–04 from interrogation of the Business and Accounting Strategic System (BASS), indicates that the cost of external consultants to the department in 2003–04 was £106.8 million.

The best information available for the financial year 2004–05 from the interrogation of the Adelphi Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system Accounts Payable Module indicates that the cost of external consultants to the Department was £46.9 million.

The Department awards contracts in open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations based on best value for money. The use of external consultants in the Home Office provides the Department with specialist knowledge, skill, capacity and technical expertise that is not otherwise available in house.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 22 November 2005 (acknowledgement B28011/5) on behalf of Lukusa Dan Mukendi, Home Office Reference M1059271. [59406]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood about Mr. Mukendi on 22 December 2005.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Banbury of 17 October 2005 concerning Fatemah Sayyabi. [60048]

Mr. McNulty: The Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the hon. Member on 17 March.

Criminal Records Bureau

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people applying for positions within residential care and nursing homes are awaiting clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau in *(a)* the East Riding of Yorkshire, *(b)* Hull and *(c)* England. [49100]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested by the hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden is not available. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is unable to provide information on disclosure applications based on specific employment sectors or geographical areas.

The CRB aims to complete disclosure applications across all sectors within the shortest time possible. Its published service standards are to issue 93 per cent. of standard disclosures within two weeks and 90 per cent. of enhanced disclosures within four weeks for all applications.

Dangerous Dogs Act

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions were *(a)* brought and *(b)* successful under (i) section 1 and (ii) section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [59034]

Fiona Mactaggart: Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of people prosecuted under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 for England and Wales, from 2000 to 2004, is shown in the table.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in Autumn 2006.

Number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates court and found guilty at all courts under sections 1 and 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, in England and Wales, 2000 to 2004[1]

Offence Act	*Offence Description*	*2000* *Prosecuted*	*2000* *Found guilty*	*2001* *Prosecuted*	*2001* *Found guilty*	*2002* *Prosecuted*	*2002* *Found guilty*	*2003* *Prosecuted*	*2003* *Found guilty*	*2004* *Prosecuted*	*2004* *Found guilty*
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1											
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1(2) *(a)*	Breeding or breeding from a fighting dog	2	—	1	—	6	3	4	2	15	14
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1(2) *(b)*	Selling, exchanging, offering, advertising or exposing for sale a fighting dog	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1(2) *(c)*	Giving or offering to give a fighting dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1(2) *(d)*	Allowing a fighting dog to be in a public place without a muzzle or a lead	9	6	4	2	3	2	2	0	2	1
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1(2) *(e)*	Abandoning, or allowing to stray, a fighting dog	—	—	—	—	1	0	—	—	—	—
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 1(3)	Possession, without exemption, of a Pit Bull terrier, Japanese Tosa or other designated fighting dog	5	2	4	2	6	2	1	1	5	2
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3											
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3(1)	Owner or person in charge allowing dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place injuring any person	458	260	490	285	537	300	560	302	597	350
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3(1)	Owner or person in charge allowing dog to be dangerously out of control in a Public place, no injury being caused	48	32	50	31	38	30	52	33	48	25
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3(3)	Owner or person in charge allowing dog to be dangerously out of control in a non-public place and injure any person	266	130	278	157	284	150	329	171	290	167
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3(3)	Owner or person in charge allowing dog to be dangerously out of control in a non-public place causing reasonable apprehension of injury to a person	24	13	20	14	18	7	20	10	11	5

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

— = Nil

Source:

RDS-Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55216]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The costs of Press Office media training are as follows:

£

Financial year	*Total spend*
1997–98	268
1998–99	6,204
1999–2000	13,152
2000–01	20,534
2001–02	27,777
2002–03	14,764

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£

Financial year	*Total spend*
2003–04	22,226
2004–05	27,234

The above costs cover the main media training suppliers used by the Press Office. Other costs cannot be provided due to disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36265]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office with its Executive agencies has put in place a range of steps to support staff with mental ill health. In-house welfare officers, working in partnership with line managers and the occupational health provider, give practical and timely support to staff with mental ill health so that they are rehabilitated and remain effective at work or, where absent, make a managed return to work. The Department is introducing the HSE Stress Management Standards with the support of the Health and Safety Executive.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are employed in his Department to deal with the criminal justice aspects of *(a)* drugs and *(b)* alcohol misuse. [58358]

Fiona Mactaggart: Drugs and alcohol-related crime are serious social problems and also contribute to the commission of other crimes. For this reason it is not always possible to determine whether a person is employed to deal with these matters specifically, as opposed to dealing with them as part of a wider issue, such as anti-social behaviour, or the support of the police. The units which are specifically tasked with addressing these issues, or which deal with directly related matters are staffed as shown in the table, but civil servants within other parts of the Home Office may also have a role to play in reducing drug and alcohol related crime and its wider effects. Additionally the criminal justice aspects of drug misuse form only one facet of the Drug Strategy and civil servants in other government departments and the government offices also play an important role in reducing the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse. In some cases the staff within a unit can be identified as working specifically on drug or alcohol related-crime issues. Where this is possible the figure given is that of the staff so identified not the total compliment of the unit.

Area of work	*Home Office Directorate and Unit*	*Full-time equivalent staffing at 28 February [1] rounded*
	Crime Reduction and Community Safety (CRCSG) units below:	
Drugs	Drug Strategy Directorate	146
Alcohol	Violent Crime Unit[2]	8
	Alcohol Policy Team, Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme	
Alcohol	Police Standards Unit[2] and Violent Crime Strategy Team[2]	7
	National Offender Management Service (NOMS) HQ units below:	
Drugs	NOMS Drug Strategy Unit [2]	25
Drugs	Prison Service Juvenile Substance Misuse Service (JSMS) Central Policy Team[2]	4
Drugs	National Probation Directorate[2]	6

[1] Full unit compliment as recorded centrally unless otherwise footnoted

[2] Subset of unit compliment

DNA Profiles

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 954W, on DNA profiles, if he will break down the 139,463 people who have a DNA profile on the National DNA Database and who were perceived as *(a)* of minority ethnic origin and *(b)* white by local authority area. [59372]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 17 March 2006]*: The information is not available in the form requested. The subject sample profile records held on the National DNA Database relate to police force area, not local authority area.

Electronic Tagging

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what sanctions are available for use against private firms responsible for electronic tagging which do not meet service level requirements. [59562]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office conducts a monthly audit of the performance of the two current electronic monitoring service providers against a range of performance measures. A failure to meet the specified service levels results in financial deductions from the amount paid to them for providing the service. Since the start of the current contracts in April 2005, a total of £130,000 has been deducted from both service providers.

The contracts contain standard provisions enabling the Government to terminate them early if the contractor defaults on the provision of the service.

EU Accession Countries (Employment Figures)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people from EU accession countries were working in the UK in the latest month for which figures are available. [59369]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The Accession Monitoring Report for May 2004-December 2005 sets out the number of citizens from the EU Accession countries (A8 nationals) who have applied to register with the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) during this period. This report is available on the Home Office IND website via: http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/about_us/reports/accession_monitoring.html.

Home Detention Curfew

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many home detention curfew applications were turned down in each year since 2001; how many of those were appealed against; and how many appeals were successful. [59373]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prisoners who are held in prison service establishments and contracted prisons in England and Wales may be considered for early release under the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme if they meet the statutory and administrative eligibility criteria and supply details of a proposed curfew address.

Information on the number of eligible prisoners who, according to the prison service Inmate Information System, were refused HDC in each year since 2001 is given in the table. Information on the reasons for the refusal of individual applications, and the outcome of appeals could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Number of prisoners refused home detention curfew in England and Wales since 2001

	Refused
2001	20,080
2002	14,320
2003	13,329
2004	11,888
2005	11,960

Notes:

1. These statistics are based on information recorded on the central; prison service IT system on 28 February 2006.
2. Further updates and amendments may be made to records on this system in future resulting in revised figures.

Howard League for Penal Reform

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the Howard League for Penal Reform of 28 October 2005 suggesting a public inquiry into the treatment of SP, a juvenile girl. [56697]

Fiona Mactaggart: We are considering the issues raised by the Howard League for Penal Reform and will write in reply as soon as the position is clearer.

Legal Services Commission

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications for the *(a)* workload and *(b)* case management of the Immigration and Nationality Department of the decision by the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist support and advice on immigration matters; and if he will make a statement. [54719]

Mr. McNulty: The decision by the Legal Services Commission (LSC) to withdraw specialist support funding should have a minimal impact on the workload and case management of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

Specialist support services form part of the LSC special projects budget that was reviewed in the summer 2005 against a number of criteria. The LSC concluded that as specialist support services provide advice in civil categories of law to other legal advisors and not directly to clients, this did not represent the most cost-effective approach to meet the increasing need for front-line advice. The LSC has therefore decided not to continue funding for specialist support from July 2006.

The LSC's decision means resources will be refocused with the aim of increasing access to legal services for vulnerable people.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, *(b)* the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and *(c)* pro-bono law firms about the implications of the decision by the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist support and advice on immigration matters; and if he will make a statement. [54720]

Mr. McNulty: I am not aware the Home Department have had any discussions with any of the organisations mentioned on this subject. The Legal Services Commission (LSC) advise that the impact of the withdrawal of specialist support funding is expected to be minimal. A rapid expansion of the LSC's supplier base in the immigration and asylum category justified a specialist support mechanism for advisers at the time of its introduction but since then the quality of immigration and asylum advice has increased substantially. The LSC has introduced the Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme, which involves the testing and accreditation of individual advisers, and which became compulsory from August 2005. Higher quality standards have obviated the need for specialist support beyond that which will still be available through the instruction of specialist counsel in a small number of specific and complex cases.

National Offender Management Service

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether probation boards have a statutory duty to enter into service level agreements with regional offender managers under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [59965]

Fiona Mactaggart: Regional Offender Managers (ROMs) will be commissioning services from prison and probation areas through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) from 1 April 2006. The current legislative framework which sets out the statutory duties of probation boards remains in place, and is unchanged by the creation of SLAs. However, the SLAs are the key mechanism for introducing commissioning, and signed SLAs will demonstrate the strength of the relationships. Legal authority is derived from the fact that ROMs are Crown servants exercising the powers of the Secretary of State.

Life Imprisonment

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been sentenced to life imprisonment since 1992; and of these how many served *(a)* less than five years, *(b)* between five and 10 years, *(c)* between 10 and 15 years and *(d)* between 15 and 20 years before being released on licence. [58860]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on time served for the first release on licence of life sentenced prisoners is given in the following table.

Reception of prisoners under a life sentence since 1992, by time served before first release on licence

		Time served by prisoner when released on licence		
Year sentenced	*Number of prisoners received under life sentences*[1]	*Less than five years*	*Five and less than 10 years*	*10 and less than 15 years*
1992	236	1	26	41
1993	243	—	24	36
1994	222	—	32	23
1995	280	1	32	2
1996	338	2	24	—
1997	384	8	14	—
1998	413	10	15	—
1999	483	23	7	—
2000	484	19	—	—
2001	512	5	—	—
2002	533	6	—	—
2003	509	—	—	—
2004	582	—	—	—

Source:
Prison Service IT system.

Management of Detained Cases Unit

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people held in detention who claimed to be victims of torture have had their case referred to his Department's Management of Detained Cases Unit in the last 12 months; what decisions were made in their cases; how many have not yet had a decision on their case; what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest time is for those still awaiting a decision; what the (i) average and (ii) longest times were from referral to decision in those cases where a decision has been made; and if he will make a statement. [59708]

Mr. McNulty: Rule 35 (3) of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 (SI 238 2001) requires medical practitioners to report to the manager of Immigration Service Removal Centres any cases where there is concern that an individual may have been the victim of torture. It is sufficient for a detainee to claim torture for rule 35(3) to be triggered. Such information may not always be referred to the Management of Detained Cases Unit (MODCU) given that MODCU take responsibility for detained cases after the 28th day of detention. MODCU do, however, have responsibility for managing all cases relating to the detention of families with children from the outset. Caseworkers are required to consider what action may be necessary in the light of such information. Records of the number of cases referred under rule 35(3) and details of what happened in those cases is not held centrally and could only be obtained through examination of individual files at disproportionate cost.

Passports

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide the estimated costs, disaggregated from the overall increase in passport costs, of *(a)* the Authentication by Interview scheme, *(b)* the acquisition of the 69 potential sites for new passport offices, *(c)* the Personal Identification Project and *(d)* the setting up of systems to capture and record fingerprints in passports. [54053]

Mr. Charles Clarke: With regard to the Authentication by Interview scheme a contract has been signed with Mapeley AbI Provider Ltd. to provide premises and facilities management services.

The contract value is £55 million for a contract period of three years. Further costs will be incurred, for example for provision of IT support and for staffing of the offices.

These costs have been included in the estimated costs for the first year of AbI operation which have been aggregated within the total estimated unit cost of 57.93p for 2006–07 published in the UKPS Corporate Plan.

The Personal Identification Project (PIP) is in pilot operation at present and the estimated costs will depend on the outcome of the pilot and full roll out across the UKPS offices. The main impact of PIP is in staffing costs; these are part of the overall UKPS passport examiner costs and PIP is to be fully integrated into normal business processes. The predicted cost impacts are also built into the above 2006–07 unit cost.

The cost estimates for second generation biometric passports incorporating fingerprints will partly depend on the timing of their introduction. While our current assumption is that they will be issued prior to the introduction of ID cards, no final decision has been made on the timing as this depends on the ID Cards Bill, implementation timetable of the EU Passport Regulation and the Government's challenge to its scope. Publishing at this stage would put at risk the ability to secure value for money in negotiations with potential suppliers so these costs are commercial in confidence.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK passports were issued in Northern Ireland in 2005; and how many checks were made of the authenticity of those giving counter signatures in that year. [59605]

Andy Burnham: The number of passport applications and counter signature verification checks processed by the United Kingdom Passport Service at the Belfast office are as follows:

	2005
Total applications processed by Belfast office	308,107
Applications with counter signatures[1]	94,200

[1] The volume of counter signature checks relates directly to the volume of new passport applications and the volume of passport applications to replace lost or stolen passports. Counter signature verification is carried out on all of these applications.

Note:

The volume of passport applications processed via the UKPS Belfast office is not directly related to the volume of passports requested by the residents of Northern Ireland. Applications processed in Belfast can be sourced from locations across the UK. Data specific to the origin of applications is not available.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used for deciding *(a)* when and *(b)* whether a passport holder may renew their passport. [59655]

Andy Burnham: British Passport holders may surrender their existing passport for renewal at any time they choose. The full fee must be paid and no refund can be given in respect of unexpired validity in the old passport. The UK Passport Service will add up to 9 months of unexpired validity from the old passport to the new one.

Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what impact he expects identity tracking of prison visitors to have on *(a)* drug trafficking and *(b)* the supply of contraband in prisons; and if he will make a statement. [59200]

Fiona Mactaggart: A wide range of measures are already in place to deal with visitors involved in drug trafficking and the supply of contraband. Around 25 prisons have introduced biometrics of visitors with a further 20 planned. The tracking of visitors using biometric technology will provide establishments with greater assurance as to the identity of visitors and assist in enforcing the measures imposed on those visitors found to have been smuggling drugs and contraband.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the role of intervention teams in the performance of prisons. [59203]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is no current system for sending 'intervention teams' into prisons to improve performance. As the National Offender Management Service develops its commissioning arrangements, it will continue to look primarily to line management—whether in the public sector Prison Service or the contracted sector—to remedy under-performance, reinforcing or replacing prison managers as necessary. Under service level agreements and contracts the Regional Offender Managers may require providers to produce a specific recovery plan to address particular difficulties.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons' conclusions that some centrally set prison standards and targets were unnecessary and distracting; what action he is taking to address those concerns; if he will list the centrally set prison standards and targets to which the Chief Inspector refers; and if he will make a statement. [59207]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers CBE, does not recognise the words apparently attributed to her, but would not hesitate to criticise standards or targets as inappropriate where this is merited. Information on the Prison Inspectorate's independent inspection criteria, 'Expectations', may be found on the Inspectorate's website at:

http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprisons/.

Prison standards and targets are a key part of processes for improving performance. The current suite of Prison Service Performance Standards provides a vital qualitative dimension to the performance management framework for prisons. Performance targets provide essential quantitative feedback. They ensure that operational managers are clear on what is expected of them and that they have information available that enables them to assess performance in establishments and identify the scope for further improvement. Information on Prison Service Standards and targets may be found on the Prison Service website at:

www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is currently reviewing the performance management framework for prisons as commissioning relationships develop. The aim is a NOMS performance management system that enables effective, transparent monitoring and ensures clear lines of accountability are in place at every level of the organisation.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prisons which exceeded maximum capacity in each of the last five years. [59318]

Fiona Mactaggart: No prisons have exceeded their maximum capacity in the last five years.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison population at each prison was detained two to a cell designed for one in each of the last five years. [59319]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table shows the proportion of the population detained two to a cell designed for one in each prison establishment in England and Wales for the last five full financial years.

Table showing the proportion of the prison population in England and Wales detained two to a cell designed for one in each establishment between 2000-01 and 2004-05.

Percentage *Establishment name*	*2000-01*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Acklington	0.00	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00
Albany	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Altcourse	n/a	n/a	73.90	76.70	74.80
Ashfield	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table showing the proportion of the prison population in England and Wales detained two to a cell designed for one in each establishment between 2000–01 and 2004–05.

Percentage Establishment name	*2000-01*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Ashwell	0.00	0.00	1.30	1.00	0.60
Askham Grange	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	0.00
Aylesbury	0.00	0.10	0.30	0.90	0.30
Bedford	42.10	35.60	53.10	55.30	51.30
Belmarsh	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Birmingham	67.20	26.80	42.70	41.60	38.50
Blakenhurst	41.80	21.50	24.40	25.70	24.60
Blantyre House	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Blundeston	0.00	n/a	9.10	8.30	6.80
Brinsford	19.90	14.40	12.30	11.50	10.00
Bristol	11.90	15.00	14.70	15.00	53.50
Brixton	35.90	31.50	31.70	29.50	28.40
Brockhill	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bronzefield	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
Buckley Hall	n/a	11.60	8.50	14.60	18.30
Bullingdon	8.70	8.70	12.10	15.30	41.60
Bullwood Hall	0.00	n/a	3.50	4.10	0.00
Camp Hill	20.20	40.90	52.00	47.20	21.60
Canterbury	70.20	74.20	80.50	81.80	76.30
Cardiff	67.40	76.60	75.80	79.50	69.20
Castington	0.00	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00
Channings Wood	17.20	2.30	6.50	6.00	5.60
Chelmsford	20.00	17.90	51.00	45.30	43.80
Coldingley	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	4.80
Cookham Wood	33.40	34.90	31.30	47.00	38.20
Dartmoor	0.00	n/a	7.50	8.40	6.90
Deerbolt	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Doncaster	n/a	n/a	31.40	61.90	58.00
Dorchester	54.10	59.10	73.50	76.20	76.10
Dovegate	n/a	n/a	1.00	7.50	7.20
Dover	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
Downview	9.70	1.30	0.00	0.00	0.00
Drake Hall	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00	0.00
Durham	51.60	50.10	50.90	50.70	64.90
East Sutton Park	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eastwood Park	18.00	16.80	16.80	15.70	13.90
Edmunds Hill	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00
Elmley	24.50	21.50	25.00	24.50	24.80
Erlestoke	0.00	0.30	3.30	3.90	3.80
Everthorpe	7.00	13.80	12.90	13.70	12.90
Exeter	69.40	29.10	23.70	41.50	78.40
Featherstone	0.00	0.00	2.90	3.80	3.60
Feltham	1.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/a
Ford	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00
Forest Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.70	21.90
Foston Hall	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00	n/a
Frankland	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Full Sutton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Garth	0.00	0.00	3.00	4.00	5.10
Gartree	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a
Glen Parva	26.60	51.40	53.20	48.20	45.10
Gloucester	51.60	57.70	60.70	55.30	52.10
Grendon	0.00	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00
Guys Marsh	11.80	12.50	14.10	12.70	11 .70
Haslar	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a
Hatfield	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Haverigg	0.00	0.10	2.20	1.90	2.30
Hewell Grange	0.00	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00
High Down	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Highpoint	0.00	0.50	5.50	6.10	5.40
Hindley	0.00	0.00	2.20	1.80	0.00
Hollesley Bay	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
Holloway	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Holme House	0.00	9.40	20.60	21.00	26.10
Hull	0.00	0.00	45.40	42.90	46.90
Huntercombe	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kingston	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kirkham	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a
Kirklevington	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	0.00
Lancaster	0.00	0.00	38.20	66.50	68.60
Lancaster Farms	5.30	11.00	10.40	9.30	8.60

Table showing the proportion of the prison population in England and Wales detained two to a cell designed for one in each establishment between 2000–01 and 2004–05.

Percentage *Establishment name*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Latchmere House	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leeds	48.40	67.20	74.60	75.10	74.50
Leicester	83.00	84.60	89.20	88.00	86.00
Lewes	7.30	4.10	21 .20	29.00	27.70
Leyhill	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lincoln	64.30	63.40	59.70	68.00	69.80
Lindholme	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	1.70
Littlehey	7.40	4.30	10.20	10.40	13.10
Liverpool	23.90	32.20	32.30	34.60	32:40
Long Lartin	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00
Low Newton	29.10	28.30	30.80	28.80	25.10
Lowdham Grange	n/a	n/a	3.50	7.60	5.10
Maidstone	15.40	0.10	0.00	0.00	21.00
Manchester	25.80	48.00	57.40	56.30	55.60
Moorland	6.20	6.10	7.10	5.80	5.50
Morion Hall	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mount	8.30	8.60	12.70	13.50	7.20
New Hall	15.20	17.30	16.60	12.50	7.70
North Sea Camp	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00
Northallerton	80.90	69.60	62.00	68.40	67.90
Norwich	36.80	47.00	50.60	48.50	46.70
Nottingham	24.70	45.50	53.40	56.70	62.10
Onley	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00
Pare	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.80
Parkhurst	4.60	0.20	0.00	7.60	7.50
Pentonville	33.80	33.80	32.60	36.80	40.10
Peterborough	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Portland	20.20	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Preston	72.60	79.90	84.40	91.40	90.20
Ranby	9.00	11.70	15.50	20.00	16.20
Reading	56.10	60.40	67.20	67.70	68.10
Risley	0.00	4.40	6.30	4.70	5.50
Rochester	3.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rye Hill	n/a	n/a	15.20	14.20	10.40
Send	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
Shepton Mallet	48.90	8.80	25.30	24.00	23.10
Shrewsbury	58.40	86.60	91.10	89.60	81.20
Stafford	0.00	0.00	50.10	67.90	60.50
Standford Hill	0.00	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stocken	4.10	4.40	6.80	4.20	4.20
Stoke Heath	7.80	3.40	28.80	28.80	23.70
Styal	7.60	10.10	8.90	7.00	17.00
Sudbury	0.00	n/a	n/a	0.60	0.20
Swaleside	0.00	0.40	3.10	3.20	3.00
Swansea	68.90	60.10	77.60	71.60	68.50
Swinfen Hall	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Thorn Cross	0.00	n/a	0.00	n/a	n/a
Usk·Prescoed	52.20	54.00	55.20	50.40	53.30
Verne	5.10	6.40	9.20	9.70	9.20
Wakefield	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wandsworth	25.30	37.20	46.50	58.90	63.60
Warren Hill	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00
Wayland	5.70	6.20	11.40	11.90	10.90
Wealstun	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Weare	8.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wellingborough	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.60	3.90
Werrington	12.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wetherby	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.70
Whatton	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.00	10.00
Whitemoor	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00	0.00
Winchester	49.50	49.00	54.70	59.70	60.00
Wolds	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	22.30
Woodhill	16.60	13.90	24.40	29.50	31.30
Wormwood Scrubs	0.00	1.00	7.40	10.20	10.60
Wymott	0.00	0.00	3.00	4.00	3.30

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time equivalent prison officer vacancies there have been *(a)* at each prison and *(b)* in aggregate as measured against the operational staffing requirement in each year since 1997. [59321]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table gives information on staff vacancies against operational staffing requirement at 31 March 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 for each public sector prison establishment and an aggregate shortfall, including staffing availability contributed by officers working contracted supplementary hours (CSH). Information prior to 2001 is not available and the contribution of CSH to staffing availability was not collated for 2001, 2002 and 2003. Therefore the stated shortfalls for these years show a higher shortfall than was the case. Data is not collated centrally on contracted prisons.

Prison officer vacancies against operational staffing requirement in public sector in prisons in England and Wales between March 2001 and March 2005

Establishment	*31 March 2001*	*31 March 2002*	*31 March 2003*	*31 March 2004*	*31 March 2005*
Acklington	—	4	9	1	5
Albany	—	4	7	6	10
Ashwell	11	2	3	7	5
Askham Grange	1	—	2	1	—
Aylesbury	—	2	5	20	17
Bedford	—	12	20	15	4
Belmarsh	9	13	48	20	26
Birmingham	—	6	3	27	30
Blakenhurst	—	—	1	—	4
Blantyre House	1	1	1	—	2
Blundeston	—	—	1	2	1
Brinsford	5	5	3	6	24
Bristol	3	9	34	20	13
Brixton	12	10	19	12	6
Brockhill	3	11	2	3	5
Buckley Hall	—	—	1	7	—
Bullingdon	19	43	33	18	17
Bullwood Hall	5	18	14	12	12
Camp Hill	—	4	—	7	—
Canterbury	1	—	—	—	1
Cardiff	1	14	10	3	—
Castington	9	11	—	13	—
Channings Wood	4	2	—	—	4
Chelmsford	9	12	—	13	8
Coldingley	4	8	4	1	11
Cookham Wood	1	7	10	3	—
Dartmoor	—	—	—	4	9
Deerbolt	—	1	21	2	—
Dorchester	5	—	8	1	—
Dover	—	9	6	3	—
Downview	—	3	13	16	—
Drake Hall	2	16	3	2	5
Durham	—	10	17	—	—
East Sutton Park	—	1	—	—	—
Eastwood Park	4	4	7	2	9
Edmunds Hill	—	2	9	13	—
Elmley	—	7	—	9	—
Erlestoke	—	8	26	6	7
Everthorpe	—	—	1	—	—
Exeter	4	7	27	9	2
Featherstone	5	1	3	—	3
Feltham	32	49	44	39	17
Ford	—	3	3	3	9
Foston Hall	6	6	—	5	6
Frankland	5	21	26	3	4
Full Sutton	2	2	12	14	12
Garth	—	3	6	5	11
Gartree	—	2	—	4	27
Glen Parva	14	20	—	34	5
Gloucester	5	15	13	14	1
Grendon	6	12	19	12	3
Guys Marsh	4	2	14	4	4
Haslar	—	—	3	1	—
Haverigg	—	6	—	9	6
Hewell Grange	—	—	3	1	1
High Down	—	21	44	21	10
Highpoint	—	—	—	14	—
Hindley	2	38	40	18	17
Hollesley Bay	—	8	3	1	2
Holloway	17	45	30	10	40
Holme House	5	4	—	5	3
Hull	—	1	—	10	8
Huntercombe	16	3	9	14	22

Prison officer vacancies against operational staffing requirement in public sector in prisons in England and Wales between March 2001 and March 2005

Establishment	*31 March 2001*	*31 March 2002*	*31 March 2003*	*31 March 2004*	*31 March 2005*
Kingston	—	2	1	1	5
Kirkham	1	—	—	1	2
Kirklevington Grange	1	—	—	1	—
Lancaster	—	1	9	4	1
Lancaster Farms	—	7	40	20	11
Latchmere House	—	—	3	—	5
Leeds	—	—	5	1	3
Leicester	—	2	—	8	8
Lewes	1	12	5	8	5
Leyhill	2	5	6	3	3
Lincoln	—	—	11	—	—
Lindholme	—	—	7	5	—
Littlehey	10	3	9	8	2
Liverpool	—	—	13	—	2
Long Lartin	—	4	21	18	16
Low Newton	2	—	2	—	4
Maidstone	4	6	—	—	3
Manchester	5	1	—	40	41
Moorland	—	2	—	—	—
Morton Hall	12	7	4	—	2
New Hall	12	3	8	15	6
North Sea Camp	5	5	4	1	2
Northallerton	—	—	—	—	1
Norwich	5	14	2	8	4
Nottingham	13	18	14	—	3
Onley	8	9	25	4	9
Parkhurst	9	15	6	6	11
Pentonville	10	32	11	17	—
Portland	5	8	12	10	9
Preston	—	—	3	10	1
Ranby	3	4	—	11	6
Reading	3	3	4	5	—
Risley	—	15	11	8	17
Rochester	—	7	11	13	—
Send	2	10	10	7	1
Shepton Mallet	—	1	—	2	1
Shrewsbury	1	—	—	6	8
Stafford	—	2	—	—	—
Standford Hill	5	9	2	3	—
Stocken	5	—	5	2	3
Stoke Heath	11	4	—	3	15
Styal	—	3	6	7	7
Sudbury	—	—	1	—	—
Swaleside	13	18	5	—	—
Swansea	—	—	—	1	2
Swinfen Hall	—	—	—	—	11
The Mount	6	14	12	16	16
The Verne	3	—	—	1	—
Thorn Cross	3	4	6	2	3
Usk/Prescoed	—	2	2	3	—
Wakefield	—	4	—	8	3
Wandsworth	2	—	7	13	25
Warren Hill	—	—	4	13	9
Wayland	6	3	2	6	8
Wealstun	2	6	—	—	—
Weare	—	—	—	4	6
Wellingborough	8	—	5	5	3
Werrington	2	2	6	10	1
Wetherby	3	9	2	6	11
Whatton	1	—	—	4	—
Whitemoor	3	22	38	39	17
Winchester	—	—	—	—	4
Woodhill	—	70	14	30	13
Wormwood Scrubs	2	20	26	17	—
Wymott	—	3	10	—	14
Equivalent full-time equivalent staff					
Contribution of contract supplementary	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	313	413
Aggregate shortfall including contract supplementary hours	169	804	804	440	264
As percentage of operational staffing requirement	0.7	3.4	3.4	1.8	1.1

[1] Contribution of contract supplementary hours unknown.

Public Order

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders under the age of 25 have been placed under intensive supervision in *(a)* Swindon and *(b)* England in each of the last five years. [59019]

Fiona Mactaggart: Intensive Supervision schemes have only been used for offenders aged 20 and under; the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme for those aged under 18, and the Intensive Control and Change Programme as a pilot for those aged 18 to 20. Numbers placed under these schemes are shown in the tables. The Intensive Control and Change Programme was not piloted in Swindon.

Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme: 10 to 17 year olds

	Swindon and Wiltshire	*England*
July 2001 to March 2002	0	789
April 2002 to March 2003	0	2,809
April 2003 to March 2004	0	4,389
April 2004 to March 2005	19	4,668
April 2005 to December 2005	15	3,932
Total	34	16,587

Intensive Control and Change Programme: 18 to 20 year olds

	Swindon and Wiltshire	*England*
July 2001 to March 2002	0	789
April 2002 to March 2003	0	2,809
April 2003 to March 2004	489	4,878
April 2004 to March 2005	753	5,440
April 2005 to December 2005	153	4,100
Total	1,395	18,016

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many detainees were being held on remand in each of the last 12 months for which figures are available. [59304]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on prisoners held on remand in January 2005 to January 2006 is given in the following table.

Population of remand prisoners in prison establishments in England and Wales at the end of each month

	Number
January 2005	12,415
February 2005	12,532
March 2005	12,347
April 2005	12,235
May 2005	12,823
June 2005	12,864
July 2005	12,953
August 2005	13,416
September 2005	13,523
October 2005	13,839
November 2005	13,275
December 2005	12,535
January 2006	13,529

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what priorities he has set for the work of the new Serious Organised Crime Agency. [59378]

Paul Goggins: The Home Secretary set out the Government's priorities for the Serious Organised Crime Agency in a letter on 9 June 2005 to the Chairman-designate, a copy of which was laid before the House. The letter expresses the Government's belief that all serious organised crime should be tackled on the basis of an intelligence-led approach which prioritises those criminal networks and markets doing the most harm. It also explains that on the basis of work done so far to analyse harm, we continue to see Class A drugs and organised immigration crime, in that order, as the top strategic priorities. The Serious Organised Crime Agency will be expected to focus the bulk of its effort in these two areas but will also be expected to devote resources to the other threats detailed in the UK Threat Assessment.

Sex Offences (Sentencing)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Sentencing Guidelines Council's recommendations regarding the shortening of future sentences for rape and other sex offences. [59388]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Sentencing Guidelines Council has not yet published its draft guideline on the offences in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. When it is published, the Government will have the opportunity to respond.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has for shortening future sentences for rape and other sex offences. [59389]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has no plans to shorten the sentences available to the courts for those found guilty of rape and other sexual offences.

Sex Offender Treatment Programmes

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of sex offender treatment programmes; and if he will make a statement. [59201]

Fiona Mactaggart: Three accredited sex offender treatment programmes were introduced in the National Probation Service in 2002–03 and are currently subject to an evaluation study. The study is based on psychometric information which measures statistically significant change in factors most closely linked to offending. Results are due later this year. However, it is too early for reconviction studies to be completed.

The Prison Service offers six accredited programmes for sex offenders, which are provided in different combinations according to the risk and need of the individual offender. The Core Programme, for medium risk offenders, was evaluated in 2003 and the findings indicated that the programme significantly reduced sexual and violent recidivism rates. This was particularly true with medium risk offenders but the programme did not impact on recidivism for high risk offenders (HORF 205). Psychometric evaluations have been completed on most other Sex Offender Treatment Programmes and these routinely show that participants improve in terms of their attitudes and other psychological variables that are known to predict recidivism. The Prison Service is currently designing further outcome studies to evaluate the success of its treatment programmes.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the role of attachment theory in the *(a)* construction and *(b)* delivery of sex offender treatment programmes; and if he will make a statement. [59202]

Fiona Mactaggart: The three core sex offender treatment programmes provided by the national probation service, all cover attachment theory although in different ways. One programme is explicit in teaching attachment theory to group members, while the other two take a more implicit approach and address the offender's attachment styles based upon a structured assessment of the offender's risk and need.

An important treatment target for all three programmes is to address how sex offenders relate to others and how this may need to change in future to reduce risk. This will include specific work throughout each of the three programmes on life skills including the social and emotional management of relationships, together with self management skills.

In the Prison Service, treatment programmes for sex offenders, attachment theory is the basis for modules of the Rolling Sex Offender Treatment Programme (for low risk offenders) and the Extended Sex Offender Treatment Programme (for high risk offenders). In both programmes, participants are taught the basics of attachment theory, helped to identify their individual attachment styles, and develop and practice strategies for moving towards a more secure attachment style. Additionally, all the Prison Service Sex Offender Treatment Programmes involve group work, which, as with the probation service, carries the benefit of offering an opportunity for group members to learn how to interact positively with one another.

Werrington Young Offenders Institution

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on educational and vocational provision at Werrington young offenders institution. [59206]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has set a target, for the juvenile secure estate, a national average of 25 hours a week for the provision of education, training and personal development, rising to 30 hours when resources and funding allow. Werrington young offender institution is currently exceeding the YJB's targets and has achieved an average of 26 hours during the period April 2005 to February 2006.

Werrington has also exceeded the Prison Service's key performance target of 30 hours a week of purposeful activities (which include education, work and resettlement) for the period April 2005 to February 2006, having achieved an average of 32 hours. For the same period, classroom attendance at Werrington was nearly 94 per cent. against the national target of 90 per cent. In addition to education and training, Werrington provides three hours a week of other activities such as information technology, sports, etc.

Whitley Structure

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which parts of his Department are not covered by a Whitley structure for collective bargaining purposes. [59266]

Mr. McNulty: Within the main Home Office including the immigration and nationality directorate collective bargaining with three out of four recognised unions is covered by a Whitley structure. The FDA, Prospect and the Public and Commercial Services Union are represented on the Departmental Whitley Council. The Immigration Service Union, the fourth recognised union is not represented on the Departmental Whitley Council. Separate collective bargaining and consultative procedures exist.

In the Prison Service separate collective bargaining and consultative arrangements are in place in respect of the Prison Governors Association. As far as collective bargaining on pay is concerned, for the majority of members of the Prison Officers Association and the Prison Governors Association pay is not determined through collective bargaining, but through recommendations of the Pay Review Body to which all parties are able to provide both written and oral evidence.

A number of Home Office sponsored non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) such as Centrex, the body responsible for police training, the Police and Information Technology Organisation and the Youth Justice Board have retained Whitley structures. Other NDPBs have put in place separate collective bargaining and consultative arrangements. For example the collective bargaining framework of the Commission for Racial Equality is set out in their Joint Negotiating Committee Constitution. Bodies such as the Criminal Cases Review Commission and the Independent Police Complaints Commission formally recognise the Public and Commercial Services Union for collective bargaining purposes.

The Community Development Foundation (CDF) has a procedural agreement with Amicus who have sole collective bargaining rights for CDF staff. The Security Industry Authority does not recognise any union for the purpose of collective bargaining. The SIA has established a staff forum where staff are consulted about a range of staff related issues.

World Heritage Sites

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which minister in his Department has responsibility for issues relating to world heritage sites. [59101]

Andy Burnham: Lead responsibility for policy on World Heritage Sites rests with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport works closely with relevant Government Departments on all issues affecting World Heritage Sites.

Within the Home Office I have responsibility for issues concerning World Heritage sites which fall within this Departments policy remit.

Youth Justice

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of different approaches to youth justice applied by different local authorities; what mechanisms *(a)* are used and *(b)* are being developed (i) to spread best practice in youth justice and (ii) secure (A) optimal outcomes and (B) economic efficiency; what account is taken of economics in determining the impact on recidivism; and if he will make a statement. [58651]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Youth Justice Board developed National Standards for Youth Justice (2004) for both community and secure settings. It has also developed a full set of Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEPs) which articulate, on the basis of research, key features of effective practice against which YOTs and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes (LASCHs) are required to assess performance, which is then subject to validation by the YJB. The YJB has recently developed a directory of emerging practice which encourages YOTs and secure establishments to submit examples of promising practice with a view to being placed on the YJB website for wider dissemination.

The YJB plans to revise National Standards for Youth Justice, KEEPs and practice guidance in line with recent research and an approach to the supervision of young people which provides the most intensive interventions to those most at risk of offending. The YJB is planning research on the relative value for money of the different elements of the secure estate made up of Young Offender Institutions (YOIs), LASCHs and Secure Training Centres (STCs). The first step of this will be an initial feasibility study with the full study commencing during the latter part of 2006. The YJB, in negotiating contracts with secure providers, regularly requests that efficiency savings be made on bed prices and also seeks to control price increases.

The Government's approach to reducing re-offending is set out in the 'Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reduce Re-offending' which was published in February 2006 (CM6717). Copies are available in the House Library.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Angola

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of the number of small arms in circulation in Angola; and what assessment he has made of their impact on *(a)* socio-political recovery in the country, *(b)* planning for elections, *(c)* economic recovery and *(d)* security of the population; and if he will make a statement. [59594]

Ian Pearson: The civil war in Angola ended in 2002. Despite the presence of many small arms among the population, there has not been a renewal of hostilities. Nevertheless, we judge that these small arms remain a risk to Angola's political and economic recovery and could jeopardise Angola's election timetable. We are therefore working with the Angolan national police and have funded the Halo Trust to carry out a pilot project on how civil disarmament should be approached in Angola.

Argentine-Falkland Islands Relations

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Argentine-Falkland Islands relations. [59885]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1450W.

Ascension Island

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the contingent liabilities are in respect of Ascension Island; and who bears these risks. [58743]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, in another place on 6 March 2006, *Official Report, House of Lords*, columns 527–29.

My noble Friend Lord Triesman wrote to Ascension Island Councillors on 19 January explaining that there would be no further development of right of abode and the right to purchase property on Ascension Island. His letter set out the need to balance the aspirations of those living and working on Ascension Island against the risks to the UK in terms of contingent liabilities and security and developmental costs.

Contingent liabilities in respect of Ascension Island cover the potential costs to the Government in the absence of employer organisation, including with regard to housing, utilities, infrastructure, social, education and medical services.

Brazil

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had with the President of Brazil during his recent visit regarding *(a)* gun control, *(b)* gun-related violence in Brazil, *(c)* the arms trade and *(d)* the potential for the UN Arms Trade Treaty. [58828]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did not discuss these issues with the President of Brazil during his recent visit to the UK. However, during the visit my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and President Lula did agree a Joint Statement in which they reasserted their belief in the shared values of "democracy and the rule of law" and their "recognition of the link between development and peace, security, human rights and social justice".

With these shared values in mind, we have ongoing discussions with Brazil on gun control, gun-related violence and the arms trade. We have discussed the International Arms Trade Treaty with Brazil on several occasions and expressed our support for the start of a formal UN process leading to a treaty on the trade in all conventional arms. Brazil participated in the meeting of experts on such a treaty hosted by the Government in May 2005.

Brazil (Child Labour)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that child labour is being used in Brazilian mines that supply ICI. [58827]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We are concerned about a recent newspaper article alleging that child labour is being used in Brazilian mines that supply ICI. Child labour is a continuing human rights concern in Brazil, which the Government takes extremely seriously. We raise human rights issues, including the need to tackle child labour, with the Brazilian Government, bilaterally and with our European partners. In addition we fund a number of projects in the human rights field in Brazil. These include working with local partners to combat torture, improve the police and penal systems and address the use of small arms in the slum areas of Rio de Janeiro. We also support community work in Rio de Janeiro aimed at encouraging young people to find alternatives to involvement in violent and organised crime. Our work enjoys the full support of the Brazilian Government.

Correspondence

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Minister of State will reply to Mr. Peter Bashford's letter of 20 July 2005. [60528]

Dr. Howells: My officials replied to Mr. Bashford's letter on 25 August 2005. A copy of the reply will be sent to the hon. Member.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the initiatives implemented by the Government of Uganda since 2001 to stabilise the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [59587]

Ian Pearson: Successive reports by the UN Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) arms embargo have highlighted poor co-operation by the Ugandan Government. There have also been continuing accusations of Ugandan interference in eastern DRC.

However, Uganda has participated actively in the Tripartite Plus Commission, which brings together Uganda, Rwanda, DRC and Burundi with the aim of improving dynamics on the ground, and finding solutions to issues affecting the region.

Ugandan and DRC troops, with the help of the MONUC, the UN force in DRC, have also shared information to co-ordinate operations against the Lord's Resistance Army in northern DRC.

We welcome these initiatives, and continue to impress on Uganda the need to play a constructive role in the DRC peace process, and to respect the DRC's territorial integrity.

Departmental Accounts

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the failure of certain overseas posts to submit their closure returns by 31 January 2006 on the preparation of his Department's accounts; and if he will make a statement. [59448]

Mr. Straw: As part of the preparation for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's faster closing of the 2005–06 accounts, certain returns were required as at 31 January 2006. Action plans have been implemented to ensure that any Posts that failed to achieve this requirement for 31 January 2006 will be able to make the required returns for 31 March 2006. This will ensure there is no impact on the preparation of the accounts.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which overseas posts had not sent their closure returns to the Department by the deadline of 31 January 2006; and if he will make a statement. [59450]

Mr. Straw: As part of the preparation for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's faster closing of the 2005–06 accounts, those posts operating on Prism were required to make certain returns as at 31 January 2006. Of those posts required to make the return, only three did not manage to achieve this. These were Cape Town, Rome and Damascus. Action plans have been put in place to ensure these posts meet the requirements by 31 March 2006.

Egypt

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made an assessment of the impact on members of minority faith groups in Egypt of the requirement under the Egyptian government's identity card system to register only as Muslim, Christian or Jewish. [58669]

Dr. Howells: One of the impacts of the new Egyptian identity card system is that citizens who are neither Muslim, Christian nor Jewish will not be entitled to an identity card and may therefore suffer from a lack of access to public services.

We do not believe this is in keeping with the Egyptian constitution which states that all Egyptian citizens should be treated equally, regardless of religion. The UK, along with Australia, USA, Canada and Ireland, demarched the Egyptian Government in December 2004 on this issue and as part of an EU Troika demarche in December 2005.

Eritrea/Ethiopia

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made *(a)* bilaterally and *(b)* multilaterally to the (i) African Union and (ii) Ethiopian Government on the increasing tension between Eritrea and Ethiopia. [58898]

Ian Pearson: We have consistently urged both governments to re-engage with the Boundary Commission, demarcate the border and resolve other issues. We actively seek normal relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We welcomed Ethiopia's Five Point Peace Plan in 2004. We condemned Eritrea's restrictions on the operations of the

UN Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea in September 2005 and supported UN Security Council Resolution 1640. We also held discussions in London in December 2005 with representatives of the US and other interested parties.

My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, urged the Government of Ethiopia to respond positively to the US initiative to restart the demarcation process when he visited Addis Ababa in December 2005. He reiterated this message to the incoming Ethiopian ambassador on 14 March.

We welcomed the meeting of the Witnesses to the Algiers Agreement in New York in February 2006 and the meeting of the Boundary Commission in London in March and stand ready to support further meetings.

Our embassy in Addis Ababa regularly discusses a range of African conflict issues with the African Union (AU) and urges the AU to play a role in their resolution.

Gaza Strip (Rocket Attacks)

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the effects on the Middle East peace process of rocket attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip. [60012]

Dr. Howells: All violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories acts as an obstacle to peace. Israel is entitled to defend itself from such attacks, but action taken should be in accordance with international law.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the legality of interrogation techniques used at Guantanamo Bay detention centre. [58466]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* We are not in a position to make a full independent assessment of the interrogation techniques used at Guantanamo Bay. Serious concerns have been expressed about them in several quarters, for example in a report issued by five holders of mandates of special procedures of the UN Commission on Human Rights last month. But we note that on 5 December the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice confirmed that it is US policy to comply with the UN Convention Against Torture. The US Detainee Treatment Act, enacted on 30 December 2005, provides that no individual in the custody or under the physical control of the US Government, regardless of nationality or physical location, shall be subject to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. On signing the Act, President Bush said it made a matter of statute what was already US Government policy. Responding to the UN report last month, the US Government

> "profoundly objects to the Report both in terms of process and of substance and underscores that the Report's factual and legal assertions are inaccurate and flawed".

We continue to discuss counter terrorism and human rights issues, including the handling of detainees, with the US Government on a regular basis.

Guatemala/Honduras

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of *(a)* Guatemala and *(b)* Honduras about the violent deaths of children and young people. [59742]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Our embassy in Guatemala City has been active in raising awareness of childrens' rights issues with the Guatemalan and Honduran authorities both bilaterally and together with our EU partners. We press for all instances of violent deaths to be investigated thoroughly. The embassy has also worked closely with organisations dealing with childrens' rights in both countries, including the funding of a Consortium for Street Children project on police training on child protection in Guatemala and Save the Children/Casa Alianza projects aimed at improving the juvenile justice system in Honduras.

Hamas

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government is taking to encourage Hamas to renounce violence and recognise Israel. [60057]

Dr. Howells: In its statement on 30 January, the Quartet (EU, UN, US and Russia) agreed that all members of a future Palestinian government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. We have made this clear and support this approach.

Holy See (British Embassy)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the British ambassador to the Holy See about the closure of the offices of the British embassy in the Holy See; and if he will make a statement. [59476]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave him on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2461–62W. There has been no closure of the office of the British embassy to the Holy See. However, the office did move in July 2005 from its previous location on the Via Condotti to a site which also houses the office of the British embassy to Italy. The decision to move the offices was taken in response to security concerns about the exposed Via Condotti site.

The current ambassador to the Holy See took up his post after the decision to move the office had been taken and the move completed. The decision was taken after full consultation with all interested parties.

Human Rights

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterpart in each of the 10 new EU countries with regards to protecting *(a)* women's rights, *(b)* gay rights and *(c)* human rights in general. [59917]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary regularly meets his colleagues from the 10 countries that joined the EU in May 2004, including every month at the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council. In this forum, discussions on human rights and non-discrimination are primarily in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Government are committed to the promotion and respect of all human rights principles, within the EU and beyond.

India

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of India regarding *(a)* the position of women within society, *(b)* gender equality and *(c)* the treatment of victims of rape and sexual violence. [59385]

Dr. Howells: The most recent discussions were held in October 2005, when our Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi called on Dr. Girija Vyas, Chair of the National Commission for Women. Discussions covered topics such as the position of women within society and gender equality.

Gender equality is also a key focus for the current work of the Department for International Development in India. This issue needs to be addressed to ensure the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals are achieved.

Indonesia

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made representations to the government of Indonesia in regard to the impending execution and the manner of the trial of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva and Marinus Riwu; and if he will make a statement. [60524]

Ian Pearson: On 14 November 2005, as EU presidency, we expressed to the Government of Indonesia the European Union's regret at the decision to carry out the executions, and urged the Indonesian Government to refrain from carrying out the executions, and to consider the abolition of the death penalty.

The current EU presidency, Austria, followed this up with the Government of Indonesia in January, in separate meetings with the Minister of Law and Human Rights and the Attorney-General, and in a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; what issues were discussed; and what representations he has made to him about the treatment of religious minorities in Indonesia. [60525]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last met President Yudhoyono in January 2005. They discussed post-tsunami reconstruction and the Middle East peace process.

We regularly raise the treatment of religious minorities with the Indonesian Government as part of our dialogue with them on human rights. We co-chaired with the Indonesian Government an international conference in Bali in July 2005 to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony and we have supported a number of projects in conflict areas that promote human rights and reconciliation.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Indonesia has ratified the United Nations International Covenants on *(a)* Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and *(b)* Civil and Political Rights. [60527]

Ian Pearson: The Indonesian Parliament ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 30 September 2005.

Interfaith Dialogue Conference (Indonesia)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Ministers from his Department attending the Interfaith Dialogue Conference in Indonesia in July 2005 raised concerns about the trial and sentencing to death of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva and Marinus Riwu; and if he will make a statement. [60526]

Ian Pearson: We co-chaired with the Indonesian government an international conference in Bali in July 2005 to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony. We have also supported a number of projects in conflict areas that promote human rights and reconciliation. We did not specifically raise the case of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva and Marinus Riwu at the conference, but we raised the case on 14 November as EU presidency.

Iran

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what military equipment has been provided by the UK to Iran to assist in counter-narcotics operations in the last three years. [58244]

Mr. Straw: All applications to export military equipment to Iran are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria and other policies, taking into account the prevailing circumstances at the time.

We will not issue an export licence if approval would be inconsistent with national embargoes observed by the UK. The then Foreign Secretary's (Lord Hurd) and the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister's (Tony Lloyd) statements of 1 March 1993 and 28 September 1998 respectively, set out our approach in respect of Iran. We will not issue licences for the export to Iran of goods or technology on the Military or Nuclear List, except for goods essential for the safety of civil aircraft and air traffic control systems and certain radioactive substances for medical use. No licences will be approved for any equipment where there is knowledge or reason to suspect that it will go to a military end-user or be used for military purposes. On very rare occasions and with parliamentary agreement, exceptions are made where denying an export or gift would be against the spirit of the embargo.

In 2005, we agreed to license a gift of 50 sets of body armour to the Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police who work with HM Revenue and Customs officers to fight the trafficking of heroin and opiates. In 2003, we agreed to license the export of 250 sets of night vision goggles for use against heroin smugglers; the export was paid for by the United Nations Drugs Control Programme. On each occasion, notice of our intention to license these exports was placed before Parliament and no objections were raised. Details were also recorded in written ministerial statements of 15 March 2005, *Official Report*, columns 13–14WS, and 19 May 2003, *Official Report*, column 30WS.

We assess that around 60 per cent. of all heroin entering the UK transits Iran. Iran is actively involved in the fight against drug trafficking and seizes far more opiates than any other country in the world. We have regular constructive co-operation with Iran on counter-narcotics.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the potential for the deuterium-labelled compounds supplied by the UK to Iran as exempted medical supplies to be diverted to purposes connected with a nuclear weapons programme. [58245]

Mr. Straw: There have been no applications for licences to export deuterium labelled compounds for medical use to Iran from the United Kingdom.

While it would be technically possible to extract deuterium from such compounds in quantities which could be of use in a nuclear weapons research programme, we assess that Iran would be very unlikely to use this route given the availability of much easier alternatives.

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recommendations the Government plan to make to the UN on possible sanctions on Iran. [59995]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newark (Patrick Mercer) on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2464W.

Iraq

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received regarding the use of torture in Iraq. [58810]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, recently received a letter from Amnesty International referring to their report published on 6 March that asks the UK to take concrete steps to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to protect detainees from torture or ill-treatment in Iraq. We fully agree that detainees should be well treated and not subject to torture. We will continue to take steps to help ensure this is the case.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of prisoners being held without charge or trial by the Iraqi authorities. [58812]

Dr. Howells: We have not made an estimate of the number of prisoners being held without charge or trial by the Iraqi authorities, but we raise with them regularly our concerns that anyone detained should be brought to justice as soon as possible.

Israel (War Crimes)

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assurances were given by *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department to Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni during her visit last week in relation to the issuing of arrest warrants against (i) Brigadier-General Aviv Kochavi and (ii) any Israeli citizen accused of war crimes. [57447]

Dr. Howells: I met with Tzipi Livni, Israel's Foreign Minister, on 2 March. I explained that the Government are currently considering a range of issues relating to the issuing of arrest warrants in international cases, but has not yet concluded what changes, if any, are required to current legislation. Any proposals for amending the current legislation would be a matter for Parliament.

Israel-Palestinian Peace Process

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely effects on regional stability of Hamas's opposition to the Israel-Palestinian peace process. [60014]

Dr. Howells: On 30 January, the Quartet (UN, US, EU and Russia) reiterated their view that there is a fundamental contradiction between armed group and militia activities and the building of a democratic state. All members of a future Palestinian Government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. We support this approach.

We have made no specific assessment on the effects on regional stability if Hamas choose not to accept previous agreements and obligations. However, we are monitoring developments closely.

Jericho Monitoring Mission

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what notification *(a)* he and *(b)* his representatives in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv gave to (i) the Palestinian Authority and (ii) the Israeli Government prior to the decision to withdraw the US-UK Jericho Monitoring Mission; when such notification was given; and if he will make a statement. [59332]

Mr. Straw: We issued a joint US/UK letter to President Abbas on 8 March 2006, which noted that if the Palestinian Authority (PA) did not come into full compliance with the Ramallah Agreement and made substantive improvements to the security of the monitors or came to a new agreement with the Government of Israel, we would have to withdraw our monitors with immediate effect. In accordance with our obligations under the Ramallah Agreement, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli Authorities that we were delivering a letter in these terms on 8 March. After 8 March, the Consul General in Jerusalem called the President's office on four separate occasions to allow an opportunity for a response.

On 15 December 2005, our Deputy Head of Mission in Jerusalem informed the President's Office that we were concerned about security and that, if we felt that the PA could not provide adequate security, we would withdraw them. We also raised our concerns with them on at least five separate occasions after this point. On 17 and 22 February our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli authorities that we might have to withdraw from the mission due to security concerns. On 10 March, our ambassador in Tel Aviv contacted the Israeli Authorities to urge that Israel exercise caution if the monitors had to withdraw.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had with his Israeli counterparts prior to the decision to withdraw the US-UK Jericho Monitoring Mission regarding the future of the six prisoners involved in the Ramallah Agreement; and if he will make a statement. [59557]

Mr. Straw: None.

In accordance with our obligations under the Ramallah Agreement, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli Government on 8 March of the contents of the letter to President Abbas which noted that unless the Palestinian Authority (PA) met their obligations we would have to terminate our involvement with the mission.

On 17 and 22 February, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli authorities that we might have to withdraw from the mission due to security concerns. This information had also been communicated to the PA initially on 15 December. On 10 March, our ambassador in Tel Aviv contacted the Israeli Authorities to urge that Israel exercise restraint if the monitors had to withdraw. I urged the same when I spoke to Tzipi Livni, the Israeli Foreign Minister, on 14 March, after the withdrawal had taken effect.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions the UK Consul General made representations to the Palestinian Authority regarding its failure to comply with core provisions of the Jericho Monitoring Mission arrangements since the mission was established; and if he will make a statement. [59558]

Mr. Straw: There have been frequent representations made by the UK and the US since the mission was established. We have records as early as August 2002 which noted that the Palestinian Authority (PA) were failing to meet their obligations on cell searches, visitor regimes and mobile phones. The monitors have been unable to confirm the continuous seclusion of Shobaki and Ahmed Sa'adat since 8 November 2002. Since December 2005, when the security risk to our monitors increased, UK officials made at least six separate representations to the PA.

After we delivered the letter on 8 March to the President's office, our Consul General in Jerusalem raised this issue a further four times with the President's office to allow for a response.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment was made by the British Consul General in Jerusalem of the consequences of the withdrawal of the US-UK Jericho Monitoring Mission; and if he will make a statement. [59559]

Mr. Straw: We assessed there was a risk that Israel might attempt to secure the six detainees potentially resulting in Palestinian casualties and a broader Palestinian reaction. On 10 March, our ambassador in Tel Aviv urged Israel to exercise restraint if the monitors had to withdraw. We also gave the Palestinian Authority every opportunity to undertake the measures necessary to avoid us having to take this action. However, ultimately the safety of our personnel had to take precedence.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what medium the UK monitors at Jericho prison were told to withdraw; and when the instruction was relayed. [59570]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made the decision on 8 March, that a letter should be sent to President Abbas informing him of our intention to withdraw the monitors with immediate effect unless the conditions noted in the letter were met. Our Consul General in Jerusalem called the President's office on four separate occasions after delivering the letter to allow an opportunity for a response. As none was forthcoming, the team of monitors due to deploy to the jail on 13–14 March were informed on 13 March to withdraw the following day. The monitors withdrew at a time judged to provide the greatest security to our monitors.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the (i) Government of Israel, (ii) Palestinian Authority, (iii) United States Administration, (iv) EU presidency and (v) UN concerning the incursion into Jericho prison by the Israeli defence forces; and if he will make a statement. [59590]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has spoken with Israeli Foreign Minister Livni, President Abbas and Saeb Erekat, Head of Negotiations and Affairs Department of the Palestinian Authority, the US Secretary of State and the Austrian Foreign Minister regarding the events in Jericho on 15 March. He had no discussions with the UN.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the nature and mandate was of those UK citizens present in Jericho Prison at the time of the incursion by the Israeli Defence forces; what discussions his Department has had with these individuals since the incursion; and if he will make a statement. [59591]

Dr. Howells: Under the terms of the 2002 Ramallah Agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), UK and US personnel monitored the seclusion of six Palestinian detainees. The PA remained responsible, for their detention. There were no UK or US personnel present at the time of the Israeli incursion. My Department has been in contact with the monitors since they left to ensure they arrived back safely in the UK.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the damage caused to the America-Mideast Educational and Training Services premises in Gaza following their storming by Palestinian militants; what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the likelihood of an increase in such activity and *(b)* the vulnerability of (i) EU and (ii) UK organisations in the area since the incursion by the Israeli defence forces into the Jericho jail; and if he will make a statement. [59592]

Dr. Howells: We have made no specific assessment of the damage to the premises referred to. We continue to remain concerned by the deteriorating security situation in the occupied territories. On 14 March, we changed our travel advice to warn against all travel to the occupied territories. We have also urged the Palestinian Authority to take steps to improve security for all foreign nationals and organisations. We remain in close contact with EU and UK organisations and citizens in Gaza and the west bank on security issues.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK had an obligation to inform the European Union of the decision to withdraw its monitoring presence from the jail in Jericho; and whether the UK informed the EU in advance of the decision. [60143]

Dr. Howells: The EU was not party to the Ramallah Agreement and as such there was not an obligation to inform partners. It was imperative that information about the actual date of withdrawal was kept to a limited few to ensure the safety of our unarmed personnel. On 14 March, we briefed EU partners on the reasons for our withdrawal at the Political Security Committee and issued a statement to all EU partners explaining that we had to withdraw our monitors to ensure their safety.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was his most recent assessment of the security of the UK monitors at Jericho Prison in relation to *(a)* the prisoners, *(b)* the Palestinian prison and security forces, *(c)* other Palestinian groups, *(d)* Israeli forces and *(e)* others; and whether these assessments were different from those made 12 months previously. [60156]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to her on 17 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2532W. We assessed that the risk of our monitors being kidnapped had increased in recent months. In December 2005, we learned of plans by militant groups to kidnap the monitors. This was consistent with the sharp rise we had seen in kidnaps elsewhere in the Occupied Territories, which have included British nationals. In late 2005, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) kidnapped two teachers, demanding the release of Ahmed Sa'adat, one of the detainees. It was also increasingly clear that the Palestinian Authority (PA) were unwilling to take any action against those involved.

We requested that the monitors and six detainees were moved to another area of the prison to provide additional security for our monitors. I refer my hon. Friend to a copy of the letter we have placed in the Library of the House. However, this was not implemented. With the Palestinian Legislative election in January the risks to UK and US monitors increased further. During the election campaigns, the prisoners repeatedly, and inaccurately, accused the UK and US of illegally detaining them. After Ahmed Sa'adat was elected, PFLP and Hamas called for the release of political prisoners. There was a heightened risk of the PA unilaterally releasing the prisoners. The Government of Israel had made public commitments not to allow the prisoners to go free and we were concerned the monitors could be caught up in an arrest operation.

This information, plus the knowledge that the current location of our monitors was unsafe, all contributed to the decision to withdraw. The failure of the PA to address our concerns despite repeated attempts left us in an untenable position. Ultimately the safety of our personnel had to take priority.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that there was no advance discussion between the US and Israeli administrations on the withdrawal of the *(a)* US monitors and *(b)* UK monitors from Jericho Prison. [60171]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Richard Burden) today (UIN 59761).

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his written statement of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 95–96WS, on the Jericho Monitoring Mission, at what time the *(a)* US and *(b)* UK monitors left the precincts of Jericho Prison on 14 March. [60173]

Dr. Howells: The monitors informed the Deputy Head of Mission of the Consulate General in Jerusalem that they had withdrawn from the mission at 07:30 local time on 14 March 2006.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he received assurances from the US Administration that no notification of the likely timetable or method of withdrawal of UK and US monitors from Jericho Prison would be given to the government of Israel or any of its agencies. [59761]

Dr. Howells: The joint decision between the UK and US to remove the monitors was focused on their safety. It was considered too dangerous by the US and UK to inform either Israel or the Palestinian Authority of the planned date of withdrawal.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the decision was taken to withdraw British monitors from the prison in Jericho; and if he will make a statement. [59897]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made the decision on 8 March that a letter should be sent to President Abbas informing him of our intention to withdraw the monitors with immediate effect unless the conditions noted in the letter were met. Our consul general in Jerusalem called the President's office on four separate occasions after delivering the letter to allow an opportunity for a response. As none was forthcoming, the monitors withdrew at a time judged to provide the greatest security to our monitors.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Government informed *(a)* the Palestine National Authority and *(b)* the Israeli Government that the UK would be withdrawing British monitors from the prison in Jericho; and if he will make a statement. [59898]

Dr. Howells: The UK and US consul generals issued a joint letter to President Abbas on 8 March 2006, which noted that if the Palestinian Authority (PA) did not come into full compliance with the Ramallah Agreement and make substantive improvements to the security of the monitors or come to a new agreement with the Government of Israel, we would have to withdraw our monitors with immediate effect. In accordance with our obligations under the Ramallah Agreement, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli Authorities that we were delivering a letter in these terms on 8 March. After the letter was delivered, our consul general in Jerusalem called the President's office on four separate occasions to allow an opportunity for a response.

On 15 December our Deputy Head of Mission in Jerusalem informed the President's office, that we were concerned about security and that if we felt that the PA could not provide adequate security, we would withdraw them. We also raised our concerns with them on at least five separate occasions after this point. On 17 and 22 February, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli authorities that we might have to withdraw from the mission due to security concerns. On 10 March our ambassador in Tel Aviv contacted the Israeli Authorities to urge that Israel exercise caution if the monitors had to withdraw.

It was considered too dangerous to inform either Israel or the PA of the actual date of withdrawal.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely impact on British interests in the Arab and Muslim world of the decision to withdraw British monitors from the prison in Jericho; and if he will make a statement. [59899]

Dr. Howells: We have not yet made such an assessment. Our first priority was to safeguard the lives and welfare of our monitors at the prison in Jericho. We remain fully committed to supporting the Palestinian people, and pursuing an active role in the region.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the decision to withdraw British monitors from the prison in Jericho; and if he will make a statement. [59901]

Dr. Howells: The only discussion my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary had with his US counterpart about the British monitors was on 14 March.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library the letters from *(a)* consular officials and *(b)* Ministers to President Abbas sent prior to that of 8 March concerning perceived threats to the security of UK and United States' personnel working at Jericho Prison. [60052]

Dr. Howells: The requests to the Palestinian Authority to address our security concerns were carried out verbally. In December 2005, we did request that the monitors were relocated to another area of the prison to provide additional security. On 4 January, our Deputy Head of Mission in Jerusalem wrote to the Ministry of Interior noting what work we wanted to undertake to increase the safety of our monitors. I have placed a copy of this letter in the Library of the House. No action was taken to allow this work to proceed.

Lateran Treaty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to seek amendments to the Lateran Treaty; and if he will make a statement. [57602]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2461–2462W. It would be for Italy and the Holy See, as the Contracting Parties to the Lateran Pacts, to agree any further amendments.

MI6

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what mechanism his Department has in place to identify actions taken by MI6 staff without ministerial approval where such approval is required. [60176]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign Secretary's responsibility for the work of the Secret Intelligence Service is set out in the Intelligence Services Act 1994. There are well established procedures for ensuring compliance with the terms of this and other relevant legislation. It is the longstanding policy of the Government not to comment on operational intelligence matters.

Pakistan

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Pakistani Government on the consolidated EU national arms export licensing criteria; and if he will make a statement. [59550]

Dr. Howells: Officials hold regular talks with their Pakistani counterparts on a wide range of issues including defence sales, export licensing and the criteria. The last time such discussions took place was in December 2005. The Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria is applied to export licenses for Pakistan on a case-by-case basis.

Poland (Gay Rights)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the Polish government's stance on gay rights. [59918]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government are aware of the comments on homosexuality reportedly made by members of the Polish Government. This Government will continue to make the case, at home and abroad, against discrimination in all its forms.

Rafik Hariri

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to bring the perpetrators of the murder of Rafik Hariri to justice; and if he will make a statement. [60027]

Dr. Howells: Following the bomb attack on 14 February 2005, which killed 23, including Rafic Hariri, and injured over 200, the United Nations

Security Council adopted Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1595. This mandated the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC) to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of this attack, including helping to identify its perpetrators, sponsors, organisers and accomplices. On 15 March, Serge Brammertz issued his first report since his appointment as head of the UNIIIC in January 2006.

The Government remain committed to full implementation of UNSCR 1595, and calls upon all states to co-operate fully and unconditionally with the UNIIIC.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59274]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) defines a small and medium enterprise (SME) as a firm employing fewer than 250 full-time employees. This is in line with the definition of a SME provided by the Department of Trade and Industry's Small Business Service. The FCO does not differentiate between a small firm and a medium sized firm for procurement purposes.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much Government funding is directed at promoting tourism in St. Helena in 2005–06. [56822]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

As part of the St. Helena Access project, DFID has recently supported a £65,000 consultancy to update St. Helena's Tourism Strategy. The project also includes up to £3 million to support tourism promotion over the next 10 years.

Outside of the access project, DFID is already supporting tourism marketing through annual budgetary aid to the St. Helena Government. This year, St Helena's budget includes £62,540 for the running costs of the St. Helena Tourism Office, and £250,000 for tourism marketing through the operators of the Royal Mail Ship (RMS) St. Helena, which provides the island's only regular shipping service.

In future, funding for tourism promotion in St. Helena will come from a number of different sources, including the private sector, airlines and government.

Sudan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding his recent visit to Darfur. [58819]

Ian Pearson: The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Sudan from 25 February—4 March during which he visited Khartoum and Southern Sudan, including Renk, Juba and Malakal. The Archbishop met with First Vice President Salva Kiir and Vice President Taha, and held an Inter-Religious Council forum on dialogue between Islam and Christianity. The Archbishop discussed the need for full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and for religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Since his return, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not had the opportunity to discuss the visit with the Archbishop. However, the Archbishop was accompanied in Sudan by our ambassador in Khartoum, who has reported on the results of the visit.

Syria

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to limit Syrian support of *(a)* Hezbollah and *(b)* Palestinian Islamic Jihad. [60024]

Dr. Howells: Both at ministerial and official level, we have repeatedly told Syria that it must cease its support for Hizballah and Palestinian rejectionist groups, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We continue to highlight the destabilising impact support for these groups has on regional security and the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of compliance by *(a)* Syria and *(b)* Hezbollah with UNSC resolution 1559. [60026]

Dr. Howells: Further to the second report by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1559 (UNSCR 1559) on 25 October 2005, the UN Security Council agreed a presidential statement on 23 January, which noted that several provisions of UNSCR 1559 had yet to be implemented, in particular the disbanding and disarming of militias and free and fair Lebanese presidential elections.

The Government would like to reaffirm its support for the full implementation of UNSCR 1559. While the UN has confirmed that Syria has withdrawn its troops from Lebanon, Syria has yet to establish diplomatic relations with Lebanon or to demarcate its border with Lebanon. Syria also has a role to play in stopping arms transfers to Lebanese-based militias, including Hizballah. The UK stands ready to assist the Lebanese Government to implement the outstanding provisions of UNSCR 1559.

We await the next report of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Implementation of UNSCR 1559, which is due on 26 April 2006.

Uganda

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Ugandan Government on the action taken against Dr. Kizza Besigye. [59037]

Ian Pearson: On 7 March our high commissioner in Kampala, along with other diplomatic colleagues, met President Museveni to discuss the elections in Uganda and the ongoing court cases involving Dr. Kizza Besigye.

We expressed grave concern that it appeared the general court-martial (GCM) proceedings against Dr. Besigye were going ahead despite the 30 January Constitutional Court verdict that this was unconstitutional. We were assured that the GCM proceedings had been suspended pending the outcome of the High Court treason trial, which is currently ongoing.

On 7 March, High Court Judge Katutsi dismissed the rape charges against Dr. Besigye, saying that the prosecution had failed to prove its case.

UN Human Rights Council

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the United States Administration regarding the creation of the UN Human Rights Council. [58832]

Ian Pearson: We worked closely and at many levels with US, European and other partners throughout negotiations on establishment of the new Human Rights Council, towards our shared goal of a strong, effective and credible new human rights body. We welcome the adoption by the UN General Assembly on 15 March of a resolution establishing the Human Rights Council.

UN Rapid Response

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to improve the strategic reserves of the UN to enable a rapid response in emergency situations. [58837]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

The key step in improving the strategic financial reserves of the UN has been the establishment of the new Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), consisting of a pre-existing $50 million loan facility and a substantial new grant facility. It was launched on 9 March, with contributions to the grant facility totalling $255 million from 38 donors. The UK is the single largest donor so far, contributing £40 million ($70 million). The CERF will be under the control of the UN Secretary-General, managed by the UN Emergency Relief Co-ordinator with administrative support from the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It will allow UN humanitarian agencies to begin responding to a sudden crisis within a few days, rather than having to wait for donor funds to arrive, and also to respond to ongoing under-funded crises by ensuring essential humanitarian activities take place.

DFID also provides core funding to key UN agencies which may be used to establish or strengthen strategic asset and surge capacity. For example, DFID is providing £19 million core funding this year to support the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including support to the Plan of Action for Strengthening Emergency Response Capacity. In 2005, we provided £500,000 to the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for the establishment of the Protection Surge Capacity programme (PROCAP), which provides a roster of qualified and experienced protection officers for rapid deployment. DFID has provided nearly £25 million over the past five years to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to improve emergency preparedness and response planning, supply and logistics, and staff training.

DFID is currently providing a core contribution of £5 million per annum to the World Food Programme , of which half will be used to enhance the WFP's effectiveness in humanitarian preparedness and response. We contribute £2 million per annum to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Health Action in Crisis programme to improve the WHO's performance in preparing for, responding to and recovering from health aspects of crises around the world.

DFID holds stocks of relief items in the UK, Dubai and the USA that may be used to further enhance the United Nations emergency response. Together with existing UN global stockholdings funded in part by UK contributions, such material support can be dispatched at short notice to the immediate affected areas. In addition to relief items such as tents, plastic sheeting and blankets, DFID provides specialised equipment such as communications, IT material and vehicles. The UK is a member of the International Humanitarian Partnership consortium providing surge capacity to enable the United Nations to respond rapidly through the provision of specialist teams and material. DFID supports UN Search and Rescue capability through agreements with UK Fire Brigades and specialist UK non-governmental organisations (NGO)s.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to improve the UN's capacity for the rapid deployment of troops for peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions. [58838]

Mr. Straw: The UK supports development of an effective rapid deployment capability in support of UN peacekeeping, and this was endorsed by the leaders of all UN member states at the World Summit in September 2005. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is developing three options: the provision of a rapid deployment capability by regional organisations; the provision of a short-term capability by one or more individual countries and the cooperation arrangements between UN missions in the same region.

Our Mission to the UN is supporting DPKO's work on all these options through provision of bilateral UK advice and participation in a consultation group of interested member states.

We are closely involved in the development of regional rapid reaction capabilities. Within the EU, we have been at the forefront of the development of the EU's rapid response capabilities. In particular, the UK continues to take a leading role in the development of the EU Battlegroups initiative which should reach full operational capability in 2007. While an EU capability, Battlegroups can also be deployed at short notice and on a short term basis in response to a request from the UN.

In the African Union (AU), the joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence Conflict Prevention Pools are funding technical and financial assistance in setting up the AU's African Standby Force.

Progress has also been made in the area of cooperation arrangements between UN missions. The UK has supported recent Security Council decisions authorising the immediate redeployment of a force from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to respond to the deteriorating security situation in Côte d'Ivoire, and for provision to be made within UNMIL for a rapidly deployable contingency force for security of the Sierra Leone Special Court.

Venezuela

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* militarisation in Venezuela and *(b)* its impact on regional stability in Latin America. [58829]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We regularly monitor military developments in Venezuela, as elsewhere in the world.

We continually assess patterns of military procurement that may affect regional stability across the world, including in Latin America. We monitor developments closely to better inform our own case-by-case consideration of UK export license applications against the Consolidated EU and National Export Licensing Criteria. We also hold discussions on global military procurement, as appropriate, with EU colleagues and other partners.

TREASURY

Air Passenger Duty

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue the air passenger duty has raised in each year since its introduction. [60313]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the revenue raised from air passenger duty is available at the UK Trade Info website at:

www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task = statindex and

www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task = factindex

Asda

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date meetings have taken place between his Department and representatives of Asda including Asda's parent company Wal-Mart, in the last 12 months; and if he will list the participants. [59960]

John Healey: As part of the normal process of contact with business, Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide range of individuals and organisations. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's usual practice to provide details of all such meetings. Treasury meetings are conducted in accordance with the ministerial code and the civil service code, as appropriate.

Child Tax Credit

Anne Main: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many telephone calls *(a)* by members of the public to the child tax credit helpline and *(b)* by hon. Members to the MPs' child tax credit helpline were received in each month for which figures are available. [43361]

Dawn Primarolo: *(a)* I would refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2137.

(b) I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 948W. The figures for 1 September 2005 to 31 December 2005 are given as follows.

2005 month	*Number of calls to Tax Credit Office MPs' hotline*
September	1,300
October	1,463
November	1,987
December	1,613

Data Protection

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether action has been taken to strengthen the security of personal data held by HM Revenue and Customs in the last *(a)* month, *(b)* six months and *(c)* 12 months. [44972]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC is meeting the Cabinet Office requirement and the British Standard BS7799, for Information Security, to protect the information that it holds. HMRC Directors are responsible for the security of the data in the business systems that they own. To ensure all risks are identified, assessed and managed the Departmental Security Unit is supporting Directors with a comprehensive set of policies, strategies, assessment tools and frameworks that enable effective solutions to be identified and implemented. We are working very closely with our IT provider to ensure IT Accreditation and British standards are met with effective security controls in place.

Exchequer Losses

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the loss to the Exchequer in the next 10 years arising from the sale of *(a)* Pilkington Glass, *(b)* the British Airports Authority and *(c)* the British Oxygen Company. [60047]

John Healey: The Government does not speculate about or disclose information on the tax position of individual firms.

Financial Services Authority

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform the Financial Services Authority; and what estimate he has made of the costs. [59630]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The effectiveness of the regulatory regime for financial services was considered by the Treasury's Two-Year Review of Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA), the outcome of which was announced on 2 December 2004 and involved a number of deregulatory reforms. These reforms were accompanied by a published cost benefit analysis.

FSMA enables the Treasury to hold an independent review of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the Financial Services Authority (FSA) has used its resources in discharging its functions. As announced in the pre-Budget report 2005, the Treasury aims to hold the first such review in the near future.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Financial Services Authority has spent on public relations in the last five years. [60067]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Financial Services Authority (FSA). I understand that the Chairman of the FSA will be writing to the hon. Member shortly.

Financial Services Industry

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the regulation of the financial services industry. [59631]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Treasury proposals to reform and improve the regulation of financial services are subject to open public consultation. Numerous representations have been made in response to these consultations. Full details are available on the Treasury's public website www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

Gas/Oil Industrial Production

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the proportion of Gross Value Added assigned to the Extra-Regio in Economic Trends 627, February 2006, which pertained to gas and oil industrial production in each year from 1992 to 2004. [59573]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 21 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about estimates for each year from 1992 to 2004 of the proportion of Gross Value Added (GVA) assigned to the Extra Regio[1] in Economic Trends 627, February 2006, which pertains to gas and oil industrial production[2]. (59573).

Estimates of proportions of total GVA accounted for by total Extra Regio GVA, and by Extra Regio GVA resulting from gas and oil production, are shown in the table. In addition the table shows the proportion of Extra Regio GVA accounted for by gas and oil production.

The figures in the table are based on data published by the Office for National Statistics in December 2005. The table gives details of the contribution Extra Regio production makes to the UK economy, along with the equivalent part of gas and oil production.

Proportions of GVA assigned to Extra Regio

	Total extra Regio[1]/Total GVA	*Gas and oil Extra Regio[1]/Total GVA (percentage)*	*Gas and oil Extra Regio[1]/Total Extra Regio[1] (percentage)*
1992	1.8	1.6	87.7
1993	1.9	1.7	89.7
1994	2.0	1.8	91.8
1995	2.1	1.9	93.0
1996	2.4	2.3	94.2
1997	2.1	1.9	93.7
1998	1.7	1.5	92.8
1999	1.8	1.7	93.6
2000	2.6	2.5	95.6
2001	2.4	2.3	95.4
2002	2.2	2.1	95.1
2003	2.1	2.0	94.8
2004	2.6	2.5	95.9

[1] The contribution to GVA of activities taking place on the continental shelf is included in Extra Regio, along with the elements relating to UK embassies abroad and UK forces stationed overseas. As these cannot be assigned to specific regions they are assigned as Extra Regio GVA.

[2] Gas and oil production takes place throughout the UK continental shelf.

HM Revenue and Customs (Isle of Wight)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date his Department completed the equality impact assessment for the removal of processing and compliance work from the Newport, Isle of Wight office of HM Revenue and Customs; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the equality impact assessment. [60182]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC has taken a decision in principle to move processing and compliance work from the Isle of Wight in the long term. They are now in the process of completing an equality assessment to identify all the diversity issues and take them into account in final decisions about moving the work from Newport. In the meantime they are securing new accommodation in the locality to allow them the time needed to assess the position fully. However, they have already started to address the longer term staffing implications by offering early retirement to those over 50, and identifying those who are within reasonable daily travelling distance of larger offices in Southampton and Portsmouth.

Household Income

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households contained *(a)* no, *(b)* one and *(c)* two earners in each year since 1981. [60267]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 21 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the number of households with zero, one and two people in employment.

The table attached gives the required information for each year from 1992 to 2005. Comparable information for earlier years is not available.

Households with zero, one and two people in employment—United Kingdom

Thousand

Three months ending May	*Number of persons in household of working-age[1] who are in employment* *Zero*	*One*	*Two*
1992	3,032	5,850	6,644
1993	3,271	5,909	6,745
1994	3,373	6,026	6,799
1995	3,419	6,053	6,878
1996	3,437	6,015	6,697
1997	3,265	6,073	6,891
1998	3,235	6,161	6,990
1999	3,157	6,203	7,057
2000	3,075	6,239	7,217
2001	3,062	6,336	7,246
2002	3,126	6,508	7,162
2003	3,035	6,545	7,226
2004	3,008	6,564	7,226
2005	3,068	6,531	7,313

[1] Working-age is defined as 16 to 64 for men and 16 to 59 for women.

Source:

ONS, Labour Force Survey

Landlord's Energy Savings Allowance

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate his Department has made of the likely *(a)* number and *(b)* value of claims for Landlord's Energy Savings Allowance prior to its introduction; and how many landlords have taken up the allowance since its introduction; [R] [60297]

(2) how many energy efficiency measures have been installed since the Landlord's Energy Savings Allowance was launched in 2004, broken down by measure; [R] [60298]

(3) what steps HM Revenue and Customs is taking to improve take up of the Landlord's Energy Savings Allowance. [R] [60299]

John Healey: The cost to the Exchequer of claims for the Landlord's Energy Saving Allowance was negligible for 2004–05, and estimated at £10 million a year for 2005–06 and 2006–07 at the time of Budget 2004. Detailed figures on the total value of claims made since April 2004 are not yet available.

The Landlord's Energy Saving Allowance can be claimed by making an entry in the appropriate box in the self-assessment tax return. Detailed information about making claims is given in the guidance notes for those returns.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the proportion of employees earning *(a)* the minimum wage and *(b)* less than £6.50 per hour who are employed (i) directly and indirectly in the public sector, (ii) in the private sector, (iii) in the services sector and (iv) in the tradeable goods sector; and if he will make a statement. [59492]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 21 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the proportion of employees earning *(a)* the minimum wage and *(b)* less than 6.50 per hour who are employed (i) directly and indirectly in the public sector, (ii) the private sector, (iii) in the services sector and (iv) in the tradeable goods sector. (59492)

It is not possible to identify employees who are employed indirectly in the public sector. The attached tables show employees who have a direct public sector employer only.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) does not provide estimates on numbers or proportions of employees with specific levels of earnings. Therefore estimates have not been provided for numbers earning the minimum wage. However ASHE can estimate proportions of those earning under certain levels. Please find attached a table which give the relevant information for those employees earning less than £6.50 per hour.

Average earnings are estimated from the ASHE, and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent. sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

2005 gross hourly earnings excluding overtime (£) pay for all workers jobs[1]

	Percentage of employees earning < £6.50
Public Sector	12.8
Private Sector	28.5
Services Sector[2]	25.4
Tradeable Goods Sector[3]	46.5

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] The service sector has been defined as Sections G to Q of the UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2003 (SIC 2003).

[3] The tradeable goods sector has been defined as Sector G of SIC 2003—wholesale and retail trades and the repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles, and personal and household goods.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Overseas Trade

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the contribution made by overseas trade to UK gross domestic product. [60154]

John Healey: The Office for National Statistics publish net trade and GDP figures in their Quarterly National Accounts. HM Treasury's assessment of the contribution of net trade to GDP is set out in the pre-Budget report 2005, and will be updated in the financial statement and Budget report, to be published on the 22 of March 2006.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Stroud constituency used a Post Office card account to access *(a)* child benefit, *(b)* child tax credits and *(c)* other tax credits in the latest period for which figures are available. [59882]

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Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given on 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1301–02W to the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Danny Alexander).

Prostate Cancer

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the five year survival rate for prostate cancer patients is in each *(a)* region and *(b)* strategic health authority. [60153]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 21 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the five year survival rate for prostate cancer patients is in each *(a)* region and *(b)* strategic health authority. (60153)

The latest available one-year and five-year survival rates by government office region and strategic health authority for cancer of the prostate, are for adult patients diagnosed during 1995–1997 and followed up to the end of 2002. These were published on the National Statistics website on 21st April 2005, and are available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 119 9l&Pos = 44&ColRank = l&Rank = 272.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what definition of a small firm his Department uses. [59277]

John Healey: There is no single definition of a small firm. Terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (small and medium-sized enterprise) are regularly used. The Department makes use of both of the most common definitions: those provided by the European Union and the Companies Act 1985. The European Commission definition is based on headcount, turnover, balance sheet total and independence criteria. The Companies Act 1985 defines small firms for the purpose of certain exemptions from accounting and auditing requirements and is not applied universally.

These definitions can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm and http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/audit.htm. Some policies utilise other criteria in order to target specific populations that may also fall within the definitions cited above.

Sterling Stamp Duty

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce a sterling stamp duty to fund international development. [60342]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: A sterling stamp duty or currency transaction taxation is a long-established idea that has re-emerged in international discussions on how to raise development financing. The Government have studied the technical implications of this proposal carefully, and after serious consideration of the proposal it has reached the view that such a tax could not be practically enforceable given the multiple avenues for avoidance, and the consequently heavy regulatory and implementation costs such a tax would require. The UK Government remain fully committed to the millennium development goals, and has set a timetable to reach the target of 0.7 per cent. Overseas Development Assistance-GNI by 2013. With the International Finance Facility, the equivalent of 0.7 per cent. ODA-GNI could be achieved as early as 2008–09.

Suicide

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of men who committed suicide in the last five years were *(a)* not previously married, *(b)* divorced, *(c)* married and *(d)* fathers. [59519]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 21 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what proportion of men who committed suicide in the last five years were *(a)* not previously married, *(b)* divorced, *(c)* married and *(d)* fathers.

The information on marital status at death is collected at death registration. However, this does not include any indication of whether the deceased had fathered a child.

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2004. The table shows the proportion of deaths with a verdict of suicide or undetermined intent in men aged 16 and over by marital status, for England and Wales for the years 2000 to 2004.

Proportion of deaths from suicide[1] and injury of undetermined intent[2], by marital status in men aged 16 and over, England and Wales, 2000 to 2004[3]

	Single men	Divorced men	Married men	Total no of suicide deaths
2000	44.5	14.2	32.7	3,631
2001	44.6	12.7	33.8	3,523
2002	43.9	14.0	33.5	3,455
2003	44.0	13.5	32.2	3,441
2004	44.4	14.5	31.2	3,381

[1] The cause of death for suicide was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E95 9 for 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84 for the years 2001 to 2004.

[2] The cause of death for undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for 2000 and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84 excluding pending verdicts for the years 2001 to 2004.

[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Tax Credits

Tom Levitt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases procedures for clawing back overpayments of tax credits were initiated in each of the past 12 months for which records are available in *(a)* High Peak constituency and *(b)* the UK. [59329]

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases procedures for clawing back overpayments of tax credits were initiated in *(a)* Mid-Bedfordshire, *(b)* the country of Bedfordshire and *(c)* the UK in each of the past 12 months for which records are available; and if he will make a statement. [60231]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest information on the number of overpayments by constituency at April 2004 is published in "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics: Finalised Awards 2003–04—Supplement on Payments in 2003–04". This publication can be found at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-payments-0304.pdf

This information is not yet available for 2004–05, but will be published in May 2006.

HMRC will seek recovery of an overpayment in line with Code of Practice 26, 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?' The code can be found at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/cop26.pdf

DEFENCE

Aircraft

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the Royal Air Force capability is in respect of *(a)* offensive and *(b)* defensive aircraft; [58303]

(2) what the Royal Air Force capability requirement is for *(a)* offensive and *(b)* defensive aircraft for (i) 2010 and (ii) 2012. [58307]

Mr. Ingram: The July 2004 White Paper "Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities" (Cm 6269) set out planned force level requirements of 64 offensive support aircraft and 20 air defence fast jet aircraft. This capability is delivered largely by the Royal Air Force, though Joint Force Harrier is provided jointly by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. There are no plans to change these force level requirements before 2012.

Armed Forces Recruitment

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recruitment initiatives have been introduced by the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Air Force and *(c)* Royal Navy in (i) the south east of England and (ii) Hertfordshire in each year since 2002. [57804]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* All three services undertake numerous and varied initiatives, both at national and local level, aimed at increasing the level of recruitment to the armed forces. It has not been possible to produce a comprehensive list of recruitment activities for the years requested but the following will give an indication of the type of initiatives undertaken.

Navy

Date	*Location*	*Initiative*
2005		
5–7 April	Learning Skills Council/Connexions Skills Festival (Brentwood Centre)	Royal Marine Visibility Team
20 April	Newbury	Shackleton and Submarine Display Vehicles
20 April	Newbury	Mobile Recruitment Vehicle
30 April	Goodwood Race Course	Shackleton Display Vehicle
7–9 May	Independence Celebrations—Jersey	Submarine Display Vehicle
11 May	Bedford School CCF Inspection	Shackleton Display Vehicle
18–19 June	Thanet Air Show	Royal Marine Visibility Team and Technical Display Vehicle
23–24 July	Littlehampton Boat Show	Shackleton Display Vehicle
21 August	RNLI Hythe Raft Race	Shackleton Display Vehicle
3–4 September	Shoreham Air Day	Technical Display Vehicle
12–16 September	Guildford Schools	RN School Presentation Team
17–18 September	Enfield Autumn Show	Shackleton Display Vehicle
28 September	Southampton *v.* Reading	RM Commando Display Team
3–7 October	Chatham Schools	RN School Presentation Team
6 October	Careers Fair University of Surrey	Recruiting Display Stand
6 October	Careers Fair Surrey University Guildford	Recruiting Display Stand
6 October	Jobscene Southampton The Guildhall	DNR Build
8 October	Jobs Opportunities Road Show Bromley Civic Hall Bromley	Recruiting Display Stand
10–14 October	Ilford Schools	RN School Presentation Team
17 October	Southampton Skills Quest	Submarine Display Vehicle
24–25 October	Careers Fair University of Southampton	Recruiting Display Stand
31 October	Portsmouth Schools	RN School Presentation Team
2 November	Sussex University Gradfair Campus Brighton	Recruiting Display Stand
7–11 November	Southampton Schools	RN School Presentation Team
7 November	Careers Fair Southampton	Recruiting Display Stand
14–18 November	Canterbury Schools	RN School Presentation Team
28 November	Chatham Schools	RN School Presentation Team
November	Careers Fair University of Portsmouth	Recruiting Display Stand
November	Careers Fair University of Sussex	Recruiting Display Stand
5–9 December	Brighton Schools	RN School Presentation Team
2006		
January	Guildford Schools	RN School Presentation Team
January	Surrey Skills at Sandown Park	Submarine Display Vehicle
January	Surrey Skills at Sandown Park	Technical Display Vehicle

Army

Date	*Location*	*Initiative*
2005		
28–30 June	Royston, Hertfordshire	Briefing for Schools
15–17 September	Newbury Show Ground	Newbury Show 2003
2–3 July	Aldershot (Queens Ave Playing Fields) Aldershot	Aldershot Show
2–8 July	Bicester/Hermitage/Winchester/Worthing/Shornecliff	Schools' Challenge
27 June-1 July	Portsmouth	International Festival of the Sea
17–21 October	Longmoor (2 x one week courses run back to back) ATR Winchester	Regional Look at Life
25–29 June	ATR Winchester	Rugby Look at Life
24–26 June	ATR Winchester	Football Look at Life
15–25 November	Arborfield/Thorney Island/Borden	Army Technical Challenge

RAF

Date	*Location*	*Initiative*
2005		
January		
14–16	Olympia	Adventure Sports and Travel Show
23–24	Olympia	Job Scene
February		
1, 3–4, 9 & 10–11	Rainham Mark Grammar, Maidstone Leisure Centre, Northfleet School for Girls and Ashford International Hotel	Careers Conventions
2	Gosfield School	Motivational Day
10	Ilford Town Hall	Opportunities Fair
11–12	—	Youth Initiative
13	Trafalgar Square	Chinese New Year
14–17	Uxbridge	English Schools Football Association Camp
March		
18–29	Towns around Sussex	Sussex Coast Roadshow
19	Alexandra Palace	Connexions Job Fair
March	ExCEL Centre, London	Careers Live
April		
5–7	Brentwood	Connexions Skills Festival
8–10	Earls Court	London Air Show
12–13	University of Kent, Canterbury	UCAS Careers Convention
20	Newbury	Newbury Rugby Fest
May		
12	Biggin Hill	Red Arrows 40th Birthday Party
12–13	Syon Park, London	Countryside Live
13	RAF Museum Hendon	RAF Acrobatics Team Initiative
14–15	Brands Hatch	Recruitment Stand
16	Brighton and Hove Albion	Charity 5-a-side
29–30	Southend-on-Sea	Southend Air Show
May	Brighton Bears	Youth Football/Coaching Days
June		
7–8	Earls Court	Guardian Grad Fair
8	RAF Museum Hendon	Primary School Competition
18–19	Palm Beach, Margate	Margate Air Show
18–19	Peckham Square	Peckham Show
22–23	Business Design Centre, Islington	University London Grad Fair
28	RAF Museum, Hendon	Youth Challenge
30 June-1 July	Anglia Poly, Essex	UCAS Careers Convention
June	Greensward College	Motivational Day
July		
4–10	St. James Park, London	VE Day Celebrations
4, 5 & 7	Hainault Forest High School and Thurstable School	Motivational Days
9	Olympia	Asian Lifestyle Show
July	Imperial War Museum	WWII 60th Anniversary
August		
11–14	Eastbourne	Airborne 2005
30 August-3 September	Towns Around Kent	Kent Roadshow
September		
2–4	RAFM, Hendon	RAF Museum Open Day
17–18	Biggin Hill Aerodrome	Biggin Hill Air Show
22–23	Learning and Skills Council	Learning and Skills Council

RAF

Date	*Location*	*Initiative*
October		
October	Wembley	MELA show
November		
12	City of London	Lord Mayor's Show

Armoured Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many servicemen have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured as a result of attacks on Warrior vehicles in each of the last five years; [56387]

(2) how many British servicemen have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in Iraq as a result of attacks on military vehicles since the start of the conflict; and how many of those injured in such attacks were discharged from the armed forces as a result of their injuries; [56421]

(3) how many British soldiers were *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured in Iraq when travelling in (i) armoured and (ii) unarmoured Land Rovers. [56465]

Mr. Ingram: 16 British soldiers have been killed when travelling in armoured Land Rovers in Iraq. Of these, two were killed in road traffic accidents and 14 died as a result of hostile action.

Five British soldiers have been killed when travelling in unarmoured Land Rovers in Iraq. Of these, two died in a road traffic accident and three died as a result of hostile action.

20 British servicemen have been killed as a result of attacks on military vehicles since the start of the conflict in Iraq. 14 of these were travelling in armoured Land Rovers, three were travelling in unarmoured Land Rovers, two were travelling in Warrior Armoured fighting vehicles and one was travelling in a military ambulance.

Two British serviceman have been killed in attacks on Warrior armoured fighting vehicles in Iraq, one in August 2004 and the other in November 2004.

Centrally available records do not allow us to give a figure for the number of British servicemen injured in unarmoured or armoured Land Rovers or attacks on military vehicles since the start of the conflict in Iraq. Nor, consequently, can we give a figure for the number discharged from the armed forces as a result of their injuries. Similarly, we do not hold information centrally on the number of British servicemen seriously injured in attacks on Warrior armoured fighting vehicles in each of the last five years.

Civil Contingency Reaction Forces

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civil contingency reaction forces there are; where each is based; and what area each covers. [59988]

Mr. Ingram: There are 14 civil contingency reaction forces (CCRFs) based on the 14 Territorial Army (TA) infantry battalions spread across the United Kingdom. There are CCRF headquarters in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London, with the majority of the remainder situated broadly within the boundaries of the English Government offices of the regions. All CCRFs are available to be mobilised for operations anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what quantity of cluster munitions has been recovered by the UK in *(a)* Kosovo, *(b)* Afghanistan and *(c)* Iraq since operations began in each place. [58613]

John Reid *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Unexploded ordnance, including sub-munitions, in all three countries are cleared both by military personnel and by a range of non-governmental organisations funded through the Department for International Development. Comprehensive records are not available but, in Iraq alone, UK armed forces have cleared well over a million items of unexploded ordnance, much of which was left over from the Iran-Iraq war or was abandoned by Iraqi military and paramilitary forces.

Courts Martial

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average time has been in each of the last five years for military personnel accused of serious offences between being charged and appearing at courts martial. [55462]

John Reid *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The following table details the average time between personnel being charged and appearing at courts martial for each of the three Services.

	Days		
	Royal Navy	*Army*	*RAF*
2001	129	416	77
2002	179	387	105
2003	184	343	84
2004	124	367	91
2005	115	399	56

Figures for the RAF include all cases that go to courts martial. The Army figures include all cases of murder, manslaughter, rape, all cases under section 18 of the Offences Against The Person Act 1861 and death by dangerous driving. The Royal Navy figures include all cases of murder, rape, sexual assault, wounding with intent, unlawful wounding, grievous and actual bodily harm.

The averages shown are heavily affected by individual cases where, for example, there may be unusual delays in obtaining evidence and also obscure wide variations between differing offences.

We nonetheless recognise the importance of reducing timescales, and work is in hand to improve current processes and this includes measures for the Army being brought in under the Adjutant General's Court Martial Delay Action Plan. Measures in the Armed Forces Bill will help facilitate earlier liaison between Service police and Service Prosecuting Authority.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures are in place to encourage the retention of research staff within the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory; and what further measures are planned. [44149]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, (Dstl), offers a range of benefits appreciated by research staff. There are considerable training and development opportunities: technical training programmes are offered to develop and refresh technical knowledge, there is a Dstl Chartership Scheme accredited to eight professional institutes or societies which is open to all staff.

Additionally, staff are allowed time off to undertake further study such as a MSc or PhD and relevant tuition fees are paid by Dstl. There are links with five universities for research purposes and to ensure that knowledge is current; these also encourage staff to spend time in each others' laboratories. Secondments are available to other areas of MOD, OGDs, UK Industry and international laboratories. There is an internal symposium held annually to encourage networking and debate on topical research areas. There is a Scheme for Technical Education and Professional Support to encourage networking, conferences and events for junior staff and a Fellowship Scheme which gives recognition to senior staff who are acknowledged as national or international experts in their field.

Also in addition to the normal range of civil service terms and conditions, such as the civil service pension arrangements and a generous annual leave allowance, Dstl has extended its flexible working arrangements and encourages alternative working practices such as home working wherever possible. Dstl is continually reviewing working conditions for staff. At present a review is being undertaken of its internal career structure which may result in the definition of a more structured career path for staff in both research and managerial roles.

It should be noted that both informal and formal staff surveys indicate that staff are attracted by the challenging research problems presented by Dstl and the availability of excellent scientific facilities.

Democratic Republic of Congo

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts regarding committing troops to support UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [58848]

Mr. Ingram: The most recent discussions took place at the EU Defence Ministers' informal meeting at Innsbruck, on 6 and 7 March this year. While no decision has yet been taken, the United Kingdom believes that the EU should consider the request for assistance from the UN favourably. Work continues on scoping the potential mission and its requirements. Due to our current heavy operational commitments we would be unable to contribute to any deployed force.

Falkland Islands

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations his Department has made to the Argentine Government regarding the presence of Argentine submarines in waters off the Falkland Islands. [57481]

John Reid: No Argentine submarines have been detected in the waters off the Falkland Islands.

Insurgents/Terrorists

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has made to the Law Officers, and with what outcomes, in respect of the possible prosecution of British *(a)* citizens and *(b)* residents who have (i) taken-up arms against United Kingdom or other coalition forces and (ii) trained in terrorist camps and subsequently returned to British jurisdiction. [58662]

John Reid *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* No such representations have been made.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish Sir Ronnie Flanagan's report on the Iraqi Police Service. [59987]

John Reid: Sir Ronnie Flanagan's report on the Iraqi Police Service was commissioned as part of a process of internal review. As such, there are no plans to publish the final report. We will, of course, be reviewing the report's recommendations closely and will take appropriate action where necessary.

Military Support (United States)

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the equipment valued over £20,000 that is being borrowed from US forces by UK armed forces. [54387]

Mr. Ingram: Details of equipment, currently in use by UK armed forces, that has been borrowed from US forces are not held centrally.

A comprehensive listing of all equipment valued over £20,000 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Deterrence

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which alternative systems will be considered as options for the next generation of the nuclear deterrent in respect of *(a)* platforms and *(b)* missiles; [59381]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of each main option for the next generation of the nuclear deterrent. [59383]

John Reid: No decisions have yet been taken on any replacement for Trident. Preparatory work is being undertaken by officials on possible options for the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent, including on the costs involved. This work is still at an early stage and

Ministers have not yet begun to consider the position on this issue in any detail. It is therefore premature to speculate on the range of options that might be available and their potential costs.

QinetiQ

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value is of public procurement contracts awarded to QinetiQ since December 2002. [48761]

John Reid: The total value of contracts awarded to QinetiQ by the Ministry of Defence from December 2002 to February 2006 (inclusive) was some £4,933 million. This includes the Long Term Partnering Agreement placed in February 2003, valued at £3,970 million at that time.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the advice the Government have received regarding the availability and allocation of shares in the flotation of QinetiQ. [43828]

John Reid: Advice on the approach to the offer structure and allocation of shares has been provided by our joint financial advisers to the Government, Carlyle and QinetiQ, under contractually committed confidentiality agreements.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the professional advisers who assisted in the sale of shares from QinetiQ to Carlyle; and whether any declared a potential conflict of interest. [44181]

John Reid: The Ministry of Defence's principal advisers in the Defence Evaluation Research Agency (DERA) Public Private Partnership, and in the sale of shares to Carlyle, were the accountancy Limited Liability Partnership Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), our legal advisers Simmons & Simmons, and the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) for investment banking advice on the actual sale. A number of other advisers were also utilised to a limited extent on specific issues, such as the Government Actuaries Department on pensions.

A potential conflict of interest was declared by PWC when a separate part of that organisation was selected by Carlyle to advise them, but the Ministry of Defence approved the arrangement, having received all necessary assurances from PWC that appropriate firewalls were in place. PWC's involvement for the Ministry of Defence was largely confined to the pre-vesting phase of the DERA Public Private Partnership, i.e. up to summer 2001 when options were being evaluated and DERA was being re-structured and split into QinetiQ and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL). From late 2001—for the actual sale of QinetiQ, and well before Carlyle appointed PWC—MOD's financial advisers were the investment banking firm UBS. PWC did provide one person, again under strict firewalls principles, to advise MOD in the final phase to prove additional transaction advice on the accounting detail of the sale to Carlyle.

RAF Lyneham

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the re-use of RAF Lyneham as a location for the proposed joint headquarters for the Army Land and Adjutant General. [38909]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 December 2005]:* Only locations inside the travel to work area for most existing HQ Land and HQ Adjutant General staff are being considered for the proposed integrated headquarters. Sites outside the travel to work area, such as RAF Lyneham, have been discounted on grounds of cost, staff disruption and a greater risk of impairing operational effectiveness.

Additionally, in terms of timing RAF Lyneham would not be available until some three years after the in service date for the new Headquarters.

Replacement Warhead (Aldermaston)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made on the reliable replacement warhead at Aldermaston; and if he will make a statement. [59380]

John Reid: There is no programme at Aldermaston to develop a new warhead.

As we said in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review ("supporting essay 5 paragraph 14"), we maintain a minimum capability at the Atomic Weapons Establishment to design and produce a replacement for the current Trident warhead, should that prove necessary. No decisions on any replacement for Trident have yet been taken.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the time for which Infantry Territorial Army personnel are called up for civil contingency reaction forces duties will count towards the compulsory 12-months' service within 36 months. [59989]

Mr. Ingram: Should a reservist be mobilised to undertake civil contingency reaction forces duties, then the time spent mobilised would count towards the limits of mobilised service set by the Reserve Forces Act 1996.

Trident

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has received on US missile systems likely to be available to the United Kingdom when the existing Trident fleet is decommissioned. [59382]

John Reid: I have nothing to add to the answer that I gave previously on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2120W to the hon. Member for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Mr. Moore).

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his intention that any successor to Trident should be capable of use in a sub-strategic role; and if he will make a statement. [59384]

John Reid: No decisions have yet been taken on any replacement for the Trident system. Officials have started work to prepare for these decisions, but this work is still at an early stage and Ministers have not yet begun to consider the position in any detail. It is therefore rather too early to speculate on the likely conclusions of this work.

Veterans Day

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1951W on veterans, if he will list the potential stakeholders to whom he refers; on what dates significant consultation occurred; and what the consultation method was employed. [59698]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* Stakeholders were formally briefed on evolving thinking and their views sought at Veterans Executive Steering Group Meetings on 11 October 2005 and 17 January 2006, and at the meeting of the Veterans Forum on 6 December 2005. Those organisations represented at one or more of these meetings included the following ex-service organisations:

Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations
Army Benevolent Fund
Combat Stress
Forces Pension Society
King George's Fund For Sailors
Royal Air Force Association
SSAFA Forces Help
St. Dunstans
The Royal British Legion
Veterans Scotland
War Widows' Association

Representatives from BLESMA, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and the Royal Naval Association were also invited to the Veterans Forum, were unable to attend, but received the minutes of the meeting.

Representatives from the following Devolved administrations or Government Departments attended the meeting:

Department of Constitutional Affairs
Department of Health
HM Treasury
Home Office
National Assembly for Wales
Northern Ireland Executive
Scotland Office
Scottish Executive

Representatives from the Department for Culture Media and Sport, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Local Government Association, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Welsh Office were also invited to attend the Veterans Forum, were unable to attend, but received the minutes of the meeting.

There have also been informal consultations with a number of these stakeholders where the specific issue has required this.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 22 March 2006

WALES

Miners' Compensation

6. **Mr. Havard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received on the operation of miners' compensation schemes in Wales. [59252]

Nick Ainger: I Chair regular meetings of the Wales Monitoring Group, which meets to discuss progress and the operation of the miners compensation schemes in Wales. The group last met on 6 February 2006. We are continuing to make good progress in settling claims and to date, over £570 million has been paid to former Welsh miners and their families.

Departmental Finance

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many cases of financial irregularities have been recorded in his Department in each of the last five financial years; and if he will make a statement. [57546]

Mr. Hain: None.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57669]

Mr. Hain: None. The Wales Office is a small Department (which is part of the wider Department for Constitutional Affairs). Staff are split between offices in Cardiff and London. Approximately 30 percent. of Wales Office staff are based in Cardiff.

World Heritage Sites

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which minister in his Department has responsibility for issues relating to world heritage sites. [59103]

Mr. Hain: Lead responsibility for policy on world heritage sites rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport works closely with relevant Government Departments on all issues affecting world heritage sites. Within the Wales Office, I have responsibility for issues concerning world heritage sites.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan/Iraq

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the value of UK development aid to *(a)* Afghanistan and *(b)* Iraq was in each of the last four years, broken down by sector. [54761]

Hilary Benn: Since April 2002, DFID's assistance to Iraq, in cash terms to date, has been as follows (in millions):

£ million

Sector	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*	*2005-06*
Humanitarian Emergency (UN 2003 Appeals and International Red Cross)	8.4	94.2	10	4.3
Infrastructure (Reconstruction in Southern Iraq)	—	16.9	16.7	32.6
Governance (Support to Government, Justice, Media and Civil Society)	—	0.2	9.8	8.3
Economic Reform Refund of unspent DFID contribution to the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC)	—	8.8	1.7	2.8-4.5
DFID Secondments, and Assistance to the Coalition Provisional Authority	—	14.8	9.4	0.1
Trust Fund—International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI)	—	70		—
NGO Assistance	10.4	5.1	1.7	0.4
Totals	18.8	210	49.3	44

DFID's current programme in southern Iraq includes:

£40 million for infrastructure to deliver improved power and water services

£20.5 million to build the institutional capacity of the four southern governorates and to support private sector development

£7.4 million for a team of technical specialists to advise local councils, the military and other donors on infrastructure reconstruction

£6.7 million to strengthen independent radio and TV broadcasting

£16 million for emergency infrastructure, working closely with UK military

In central Iraq, we have allocated:

£13 million to assist the Iraqi Government on economic reform issues

£13.25 million to build the capacity of key central government offices, including the Prime Minister's office, to manage government business effectively

£5 million Civil Society Fund to support the development of legitimate and representative Iraqi NGOs

£7.5 million Political Participation Fund, to encourage poor and marginalized sections of Iraqi society to engage in the political process

£2.3 million to support the justice sector

We also work through the international system, as a member of the donor core group, and as a contributor to the United Nations and World Bank Trust Funds for Iraq (£70 million contributed in 2004). DFID is working with the Iraqi Government, multilaterals, and other donors to achieve a more coordinated and Iraqi-led reconstruction and development effort.

The following table shows total bilateral development aid provided to Afghanistan by the UK Government broken down by sector in each of the last four years (in millions):

£ million

Sector	*2002-03*[1]	*2003-04*[1]	*2004-05*[1]	*2005-06*[2]
Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund	15	30	55	35
Public Administration Reform and Economic Management	1.3	24	3.8	12.2
Private Sector	—	0.3	1.6	2.5
Livelihoods	0.3	6.3	7.8	47.5
Political process and Security Sector Reform	0.5	9.2	5	5.2
Arrears clearance	12.7	0	0	0
Humanitarian	44.5	10	6.3	0
Total	74.3	79.8	79.4	102.4

[1] Actual

[2] Forecast

Further details of both programmes will be found on our website at www.dfid.gov.uk

Congo Brazzaville

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much foreign aid was given to Congo Brazzaville in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* 2005. [52083]

Hilary Benn: The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors[1] have given Congo Brazzaville the following levels of aid (net official development assistance):

[1] The DAC donors are: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

Calendar year	*£ million*
2002	38.25
2003	42.74
2004	63.28

The aid flows for the calendar year 2005 have not been published yet. The figures comprise both bilateral aid given directly by DAC donors and multilateral contributions (given through institutions such as the World Bank, the United Nations and the African Development Bank).

The UK's bilateral aid to Congo Brazzaville was £210,000 in 2002, £2.43 million in 2003 and £2.66 million in 2004. About 80 per cent. of this aid was for debt relief in 2003 and 2004. Funds were also provided for the prevention of sleeping sickness and, in 2003, for the control of an Ebola haemorrhagic fever outbreak.

Democracy Building (Developing World)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of his Department's total budget for 2005–06 expressed *(a)* in cash and *(b)* as a proportion of total spending will be spent on democracy-building in the developing world. [53217]

Hilary Benn: DFID tracks expenditure on programmes which include governance amongst the objectives. This is a broad category covering different aspects of state building and the building blocks for democracy. It includes for example support to improve poor people's participation in the decision making process with government, and building capacity in government to improve its accountability to citizens. DFID's bilateral expenditure on programmes which include governance amongst the objectives is £224 million to date (15 February 2005) in 2005–06 or 12.5 per cent. of total spending of £1.8 billion. The figure includes £12 million to date (15 February 2005), or 0.7 per cent. of total spending of £1.8 billion, on programmes supporting elections and electoral processes. Forecasts for the entire financial year are however, not yet available.

Democratic Republic of Congo

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to assist victims of violence and human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with particular reference to victims of sexual violence. [52203]

Hilary Benn: The continuing high levels of sexual violence and human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reflect the prevailing culture of impunity in the DRC. The UK is working with the international community to deal with the causes and symptoms of this.

We are supporting humanitarian agencies to provide medical assistance to victims of sexual violence, particularly in the Eastern DRC. We have recently started to fund the Norwegian non-governmental organisation (NGO) Christian Relief Network to set up and run a wing in Panzi hospital, South Kivu, treating women suffering from fistula—which is one of the most serious and devastating consequences of sexual violence. Their programme includes psychological support for patients as well as medical treatment. We are also supporting the International Committee of the Red Cross, who have recently launched a gender based violence pilot programme in the East. The UK will be spending approximately £27 million this financial year on humanitarian and health service delivery projects in the DRC through the UN and NGOs. Many of these provide assistance to victims of sexual violence and we remain ready to support other appropriate and effective interventions in this area.

It is also vital to tackle the underlying causes of sexual violence and other abuses of human rights. One of the ways to end the cycle of human rights violations in the DRC is to end the conflict in the country and the whole Great Lakes region. Conflict reduction is the major focus of the UK's engagement in the DRC. We have consistently pushed the Congolese transitional government for faster progress in a number of areas that are critical for making the democratic process a success and avoiding a return to conflict, notably preparations for elections, security sector reform, disarming militias and ending corruption.

The UK has also been working with the DRC authorities and non-governmental organisations to try and start reforming the Congolese justice sector and restoring the rule of law, to reduce the culture of impunity that allows sexual violence to happen and those responsible to go unpunished. At a local level in the East we are also support NGOs who are promoting dialogue and peacebuilding work between communities previously in conflict.

Ill-disciplined and underpaid members of the Congolese armed forces (FARDC-Forces Armees de la Republique Democratique du Congo) also create insecurity for local communities. The UK and international partners presented a dossier to President Kabila on 23 January this year cataloguing the most serious abuses carried out by FARDC soldiers, urging that the soldiers concerned be brought to justice.

Multilateral Institutions

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* funding and *(b)* technical support his Department has provided to each multilateral agency that it supported in each of the last three years. [55921]

Hilary Benn: The following table details the funding DFID has provided to each multilateral agency we have supported in the last three years:

DFID expenditure on multilateral contributions

			£000 *DFID programme*
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
European Community			
European Development Fund	132545	230883	253655
European Commission National Experts	1571	1419	1206
European Investment Bank	3108	3034	2598
EC Attribution	733505	796058	640780
Total European Community	870729	1031394	898239
World Bank Group			
International Development Association	220290	381120	205140
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	0	0	0
International Finance Corporation	577	576	242
World Bank Group TC	1072	898	1073
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency	0	0	0
Total World Bank Group	221939	382594	206455
IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility	11434	9417	1767
Global Environmental Assistance	27253	61133	52368
HIPC Trust Fund Payments	17855	19949	42123
Regional Development Banks			
African Development Bank	1026	1051	841
African Devlopment Fund	33198	32033	34602
Asian Development Bank	1091	936	689
Asian Development Fund	26103	23935	21864
Caribbean Development Fund	5319	0	3286
Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	398	182	0
IADB Fund for Special Operations	0	0	0
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	15082	16788	15898
Multilateral Development Bank TC	8430	5466	4985
Total Regional Development Banks	90647	80391	82165
Commonwealth			
Commonwealth Foundation	428	253	272
Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation	5963	5579	7309
Commonwealth Science Council	266	0	0

DFID expenditure on multilateral contributions

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*£000* *DFID programme* *2004–05*
Commonwealth Youth Programme	697	726	719
Pacific Community	0	0	0
Other Commonwealth	265	112	252
Total Commonwealth	7619	6670	8552
UN Agencies			
Food and Agricultural Organisation[1]	6129	6323	6872
International Atomic Energy Authority	0	0	0
International Fund for Agricultural Development	3000	5299	7899
International Labour Ogranisation	1387	4176	4200
Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs	3413	4507	4511
UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA)	18807	23646	17229
UN AIDS	3052	3000	8069
UN Childrens Fund (UNICEF)	17366	17303	19771
UN Development Programme (UNDP)	44934	42791	43039
UN Drugs Control Programmes	0	0	0
UN Environment Programme	0	0	0
UNESCO[2]	3324.5	2864.5	2713.5
UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)	14432	14484	19916
UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)	3560	3846	3844
UN Population Fund	9000	18100	20038
UN Regular Budget	0	0	0
World Food Programme[3]	8	1415	2498
World Health Organisation (WHO)	34156	34427	27689
World Meteorological Organisation	0	0	0
Other UN Agencies	4313	5718	5791
Total UN Agencies[4]	166882	187900	194080
International Research Organisations			
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	7464	7633	16071
Of which:			
Int Centre for Agric Research in the Dry Areas	560	560	780
Int Centre for Living Aquatic Resources M'ment	254	345	500
Int Centre for Tropical Agriculture	636	523	720
Int Crop Research Inst for the Semi-Arid Tropics	760	750	1200
Int Food Policy Research Institute	249	190	869
Int Institute for Tropical Agriculture	650	673	620
Int Irrigation Management Institute	59	0	2869
Int Livestock Research Institute	730	1050	1538
Int Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre	830	780	3590
Int Plant Genetics Resources Institute	731	650	910
Int Potato Centre	717	702	640
Int Rice Research Institute	858	750	1120
Int Service for National Agricultural Research	200	430	290
West Africa Rice Development Association	230	230	425
CAB International	425.5	650	850
Int Centre for Dev Research in Agriculture	162	140	250
Other International Research	61	0	700
Total International Research Organisations	8112.5	8423	17871
Total multilateral contributions	1422470	1787871	1503620

[1] This includes only contributions to the FAO which are counted as aid.

[2] This includes only contributions to UNESCO which are counted as aid.

[3] This is the regular programme of food aid. It does not include emergency food aid which is classified as bilateral humanitarian expenditure.

[4] In addition to these core contributions, DFID also channels some bilateral expenditure through UN agencies. The total amount spent through UN organisations is estimated to be in the region of £300 million annually.

Note:

Memo—contributions from DFID funds which are not reportable to DAC and so excluded from within the table:

Food and Agricultural Organisation: (£000)

2002–03—5889
2003–04—6076
2004–05—6603

UNESCO: (£000)

2002–03—9974
2003–04—8594
2004–05—8141

Source:

Statistics on International Development 2005.

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Nigeria

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of levels of corruption in Nigeria; and what steps are being taken by his Department to promote and support good governance there. [52202]

Hilary Benn: As for other countries, DFID's assessment of corruption and governance in Nigeria draws on a range of analysis, including that by the World Bank and by national and international non-governmental organisations. DFID's own Drivers of Change analysis, undertaken in 2004, highlighted Nigeria's history of systematic mismanagement of oil revenues as one of the main constraints to poverty reduction in Nigeria. In 2005, DFID and other development partners supported a national benchmarking of State governments, which measured a range of governance indicators, including what each State has done to address corruption. DFID is currently working with the World Bank to undertake a review of public financial management at Federal and State level, using the internationally agreed Public Expenditure Financial Accountability (PEFA) benchmarks.

Improved governance is one of the three pillars of Nigeria's poverty reduction strategy, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). As part of its support to NEEDS, DFID is providing technical support for reforms in public financial management and service delivery systems at both Federal and State level. At the Federal level, DFID supports reforms which are being implemented by a team of Ministers put in place by President Obasanjo following the 2003 elections. Discernible progress has been made on economic reform and on fighting corruption. At State level, DFID is focusing its support on a group of states that have shown, particularly through the benchmarking exercise noted earlier, that they are committed to better governance and transparency.

DFID is also supporting reforms in the police and justice sector, along with support for measures to improve the electoral process in 2003 and 2007. DFID will shortly launch a new programme of assistance to enhance the capacity of the National Assembly.

Nigeria is leading the world in taking forward the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to promote transparency in the use of oil revenue. Complementing the support which DFID has provided for the EITI globally, DFID in Nigeria has provided specific technical and financial support to a unit in the Finance Ministry responsible for coordinating audits of oil and gas revenue.

DFID and the FCO are jointly providing technical support to the work of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), which is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of a number of high profile corruption cases in recent months. EFCC investigations have led to the early retirement and subsequent imprisonment of the Inspector General of Police, the removal of the Education Minister and the resignation of the Senate President. Most recently, EFCC provided evidence that led to the impeachment of the former Governor of Bayelsa State, after he jumped bail on money laundering charges in the UK. The former Governor is now being prosecuted in Nigeria.

The UK's support to EFCC is designed to complement a much larger programme of support from the EC.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the review. [52800]

Hilary Benn: The savings that are expected as a result of DFID's headcount reductions, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review, will be part of DFID's overall Administration Cost efficiency gain which will amount to £20 million by the end of 2007–08 in 2007–08 prices.

The civil service reductions in headcount are expected to account for at least £5 million of this efficiency gain, although precise figures for these savings cannot yet be provided because the grades and locations of posts that are to be discontinued have not yet been finalised.

TRANSPORT

Airport Standards (Adverse Weather)

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the performance standards are for *(a)* the British Airports Authority plc and *(b)* other airport operators in relation to continued operations during adverse weather conditions; and if he will make a statement. [60245]

Derek Twigg: There are no service performance standards for airport operators in relation to the continuance of operations during adverse weather conditions. The paramount consideration is to maintain a high standard of safety in all weather conditions.

Cargo Transfers

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report,* column 1538W, on cargo transfers, who decides whether ship-to-ship transfers of oil and other chemicals may or may not take place *(a)* in harbour authority areas and *(b)* elsewhere in UK territorial waters. [60507]

Dr. Ladyman: In harbour authority areas, it is for the harbour authority to decide whether ship-to-ship transfers may take place—provided that the harbour authority has an oil spill contingency plan, approved by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, which covers such activities. Elsewhere in UK territorial waters, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has non-statutory arrangements and procedures under which ship owners and operators are expected to notify the Maritime and Coastguard Agency of the intention to carry out a ship-to-ship transfer, and to carry out such transfers according to best practice. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency monitors the conduct of such ship-to-ship transfers.

Commuters (Greater London)

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of commuters who travel into the Greater London Authority area for work purposes. [60407]

Derek Twigg: The 2005 London Travel Report states that the number of workers in Greater London who reside outside that area totalled 706,000 in 2004. The report can be found on Transport for London's website at httD://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/pdfdocs/ltr/london-travel-report-2005.pdf.

Concessionary Travel

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many councils have indicated that their proportion of the £350 million grant will be insufficient to fund the bus concessionary fare scheme in their area.[57345]

Dr. Ladyman: The general consensus is that the extra £350 million for 2006–07 will be sufficient in aggregate to fund the additional cost to local authorities.

Since the consultation on the distribution of the new formula for distributing the £350 million closed on 10 October 2005, 18 local authorities from among a total of 292 travel concession authorities, have made representations to the Department, or the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, about the funding for concessionary fares.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities have reported a shortfall in their funding for free bus travel for pensioners; and what steps each has taken to make up the shortfall. [57540]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The general consensus is that the extra £350 million for 2006–07 will be sufficient in aggregate to fund the extra cost to local authorities.

Since the consultation on the distribution of the new formula for distributing the £350 million closed on 10 October 2005, the following 18 local authorities from amongst a total of 292 travel concession authorities, have made representations to the Department, or the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, about the funding for concessionary fares:

Carlisle; Castle Morpeth; Chorley; Eden; Fareham; Gloucester; Guildford; Mid Suffolk; Pendle; Preston; Salisbury; Southampton; South Oxfordshire; Tewkesbury; Three Rivers; Trafford/Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority; Torbay; and Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority.

It is for local authorities to deicide on their overall funding priorities based on their judgement of local need and circumstances.

Delayed/Cancelled Flights

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that airlines comply with their obligations to passengers on delayed and cancelled flights under Regulation (EC) 261/2004 and related European Court of Justice rulings; and if he will make a statement. [60250]

Derek Twigg: Council Regulation 261/2004 entered into force on 17 February 2005. Member states are responsible for designating an appropriate body responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Regulation as regards flights departing from airports within their territories.

In the UK, the Air Transport Users Council (AUC) initially manages passenger complaints under this legislation and may, in appropriate cases, intervene on a passenger's behalf to secure a satisfactory resolution if the Regulation has not been properly applied. The Regulation creates directly applicable rights, so where this is not possible a passenger is able to pursue an individual claim for compensation through the Small Claims Court.

Where the AUC identifies evidence of systematic or repeated non-compliance with the provisions of the Regulation, it may refer the matter to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the UK's designated enforcement body for this legislation, to consider appropriate action. The CAA has the power to commence criminal proceedings against any airline within its jurisdiction that consistently ignores the requirements of the Regulation. The penalty, on conviction, is a fine of up to £5,000 for each offence.

Digital Tachographs

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact on the *(a)* cost and *(b)* sales of trucks of the introduction of digital tachographs; and if he will make a statement. [60150]

Dr. Ladyman: The introduction of digital tachographs is not expected to have a significant impact on the initial purchase cost of new heavy goods vehicles. The short-term impact on heavy goods vehicle sales will depend on whether or not operators defer new purchases until their employees are trained to use the new technology.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency gives to organisations other than the police which can access its information on car registrations and owners on appropriate use of the information. [56959]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the DVLA vehicle register is released to those legally entitled to receive it. DVLA has an obligation under various statutes to release information to local authorities and government bodies. The use of the information released under these provisions is prescribed in the legislation. Use of information outside of these provisions will be referred to the Information Commissioner as appropriate.

A review of the regulations governing the release of data is currently under way. I refer the hon. Member to my written statement of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 50–51WS.

Fuel Quality Directive

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to review the European Union Fuel Quality Directive; what timetable he envisages for such a review; and if he will make a statement. [60145]

Dr. Ladyman: The European Commission is currently reviewing the European Fuels Directive, 98/70/EC, as amended. Stakeholders have been asked to submit comments, and these are published on-line at http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/fuel_quality/home

The Government are encouraging the European Commission to amend the relevant fuel quality standards so as to allow higher percentages of biofuel to be blended into regular petrol and diesel. The Commission has confirmed in its recent Biofuels Strategy (available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/biomass/biofuel/com2006_34 _en.pdf) that it will review the current standards during 2006, with a view to increasing the 5 per cent. biofuel inclusion limit.

MAVIS

Peter Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport where the Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service (MAVIS) is located; what acreage of land it occupies; what the terms of the current lease are; what the possibility of renewing the lease is; how many people *(a)* are employed by the service on a permanent basis and *(b)* were trained in each of the last five years; what the maximum number of trainees under training was at one time in the last 12 months; how many vehicles are employed by the service; what the breakdown of training between mileage driven on the MAVIS site and mileage driven on public roads is; what sites have been identified as a possible future location for MAVIS; what consultations have taken place with (i) local authorities and (ii) other local representative bodies on a future location for MAVIS; and if he will make a statement. [60059]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Department for Transport's mobility centre, the Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service (MAVIS) holds a lease of part of "O" Wing at the Crowthorne Business Estate at Crowthorne in Berkshire at an open market rent which expires on 30 March 2011. The lease is protected under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 which gives, in some circumstances, the right to extend the lease. A track agreement with a different lessor is held by MAVIS nearby to the "O" Wing property.

Ten staff are currently employed at the MAVIS with one vacancy due to be filled shortly. The MAVIS as an organisation does not train disabled drivers but assesses older and disabled drivers and passengers. Over the last five years it has carried out on average 507 driving and passenger assessments per year. The MAVIS currently has 30 vehicles, the majority adapted for the assessment of drivers with disabilities, but we do not record separately the number of miles driven on the highway compared to those driven on the Small Road System.

We are investigating whether it is possible to remain at the Crowthorne site and considering alternative sites for the MAVIS. This work is still continuing but alternative sites .that have been considered so far include sites in Lee-on-Solent, Winchester, Arborfield, Salisbury and Winfrith.

We have not held any discussions with local authorities or local representative bodies.

Network Rail

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what factors underlay the decision not to include guaranteed work levels in Network Rail's regional contractors' agreements; what estimate he has made of the relative value-for-money for each regional contract; and if he will make a statement. [60082]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail are a private company and as such these commercial matters are a matter for it alone and Ministers have no locus. Network Rail have agreed to write to the hon. Member directly.

Noise Limits

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Commission Decision 2006/66/EC., OJ L37 of 8 February 2006, on *(a)* UK noise limits for (i) pass-by freight, (ii) stationary freight, (iii) locomotives, (iv) multiple units, (v) trailers, (vi) other stock, (vii) driver's cab limits and *(b)* existing and planned (A) track and (B) rolling stock; what UK derogations and exceptions apply; what the estimated total cost is of required adaption; what time period is permitted; and if he will make a statement. [59803]

Derek Twigg: This decision brings in limits for externally emitted noise from trains. These have no equivalent in existing UK legislation. It also brings in short time limits for loud noise in the driver's cab which will apply as well as the longer term exposure limits set in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

New rolling stock has to comply after a transitional period of two years. The design of new UK freight rolling stock is such that it is already likely to be compliant. The UK has negotiated permanent specific cases for locomotives and diesel multiple units to allow for the constraints that the limited UK loading gauge presents to fitting onboard noise shields, but there may be a small increase for cab soundproofing in the cost of new locomotives. For refurbished rolling stock it is only necessary to demonstrate that noise has not been increased. There is no impact on track.

Package Travel

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to review the Package Travel, Package Holidays, Package Tour Regulations Act 1992. [60220]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 (SI 1992/3288) implement the Package Travel Directive (90/314/EEC). The European Commission is currently in the early stages of a review of eight consumer-facing directives, including the Package Travel Directive. In preparation for this, officials have met with the main stakeholders with an interest in this market to discuss how the directive might be amended and certain aspects of the current implementing regulations. We are also engaging stakeholders through an informal on-line exercise to hear their views on this directive, the other seven directives and a piece of academic research into the implementation of them in the UK. This is available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topics1/ecreview.htm.

Parking and Travel Appeals Service

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the work of the Parking and Travel Appeals Service. [60146]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* PATAS provides the independent adjudication service for deciding disputed parking and bus lane penalties charged by London borough councils and Transport for London (TfL) and congestion charging penalties issued by TfL.

PATAS has a team of Adjudicators who decide the appeals and can direct London Borough Councils and TfL to cancel Penalty Charge Notices. The adjudicators are independent solicitors or barristers of at least five years standing and their decisions are binding on both parties. They are appointed by the Association of London Government's Transport and Environment Committee ALGTEC who are also responsible for paying their salaries.

Parking Tickets

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he takes to monitor the number of parking tickets issued illegally by each local authority; if he will take steps to reduce the number; and if he will make a statement. [60148]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for local authorities to ensure that Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) are issued in accordance with primary legislation, Regulations, local Traffic Regulation Orders and on-street signage. A Local Authority Circular 1/95 "Guidance on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Outside London" has been issued to guide them in these duties. Records are not kept centrally of the number of unlawful PCNs issued but it is likely that an appeal against such a PCN would be allowed by the parking adjudicators and local authorities pay close attention to the results of appeals. It is also likely that the local government ombudsman would accept an invitation to investigate a local authority that persistently issued PCNs that were not in accordance with the national and local regulatory framework.

Rail Services

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many train services have been *(a)* cancelled and *(b)* partially cancelled in each year since 1985; and how many scheduled train services there have been in each year since 1985. [54959]

Derek Twigg: Information for franchised passenger train services is only available for cancellations, and only from 1997–98 as follows:

	Number of trains planned	*Trains cancelled*	*Percentage of total planned trains cancelled*
1997–98	5,241,370	58,472	1.1
1998–99	5,863,948	71,155	1.2
1999–2000	5,990,375	69,257	1.2
2000–01	5,976,157	135,905	2.3
2001–02	5,644,651	98,001	1.7
2002–03	6,160,475	96,068	1.6
2003–04	6,358,490	80,693	1.3
2004–05	6,234,107	75,168	1.2

SS Montgomery

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the briefing notes for meetings held with hon. Members on 6 February and 16 March on the SS Montgomery; and if he will make a statement. [60157]

Dr. Ladyman: There were no briefing papers as an oral presentation only was made at the meeting on 6 February. The meeting on 16 March was postponed.

The wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery has been the subject of regular surveys since 1965 to ascertain its condition and to consider the options for its future management. The most recent survey was in September 2005—the results of that survey are still being analysed. We are currently updating the risk assessment work and have commissioned further studies. These will be reported on in spring 2006. No decisions on the future management of the wreck will be made until all the relevant information is available.

Terrorism

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Department has taken *(a)* to prevent terrorist attacks on UK ports and harbours and *(b)* to screen cargo arriving at UK ports and harbours for hazardous materials that could be used in a terrorist attack. [59539]

Dr. Ladyman: It is not our policy to comment in detail on, or provide information relating to, the specific techniques employed to counter terrorist attacks, for very good security reasons.

On 1 July 2004, The Department for Transport fully implemented EC Regulation 725/2004 on enhancing Ship and Port Facility Security. It aims to prevent acts of terrorism which threaten the security of passengers and crews and the safety of ships. The regulation provides for a comprehensive system of physical and procedural security measures at about 550 UK Port Facilities. These are aimed in part at deterring and preventing the threat of terrorism, including the use of hazardous materials in such attacks, in our ports and harbours.

Screening of cargo arriving in the UK through ports and harbours is undertaken by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Also a programme to screen cargo arriving in the UK for radioactive material that could be used in a terrorist attack, known as Project Cyclamen, has been mounted by the Home Office.

Train Services (Cardiff to Portsmouth)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what factors underlay the decision to reduce the hourly service from Cardiff to Portsmouth by 70 seats per train. [59477]

Derek Twigg: Currently some trains that operate on this route are three-car some are two-car. The third vehicles were added to some trains to compensate for peak crowding around Bristol and between Bristol and Cardiff. Improvements in the December 2006 service specification around Bristol, by terminating fewer trains at Bristol Temple Meads station and increasing the number of calls at Filton Abbey Wood, should help to relieve this overcrowding.

The capacity of trains on a given route is for a train operator to specify. First Greater Western (FGW), who will operate the service from December 2006, recently consulted on this timetable. The results of the consultation are being analysed and FGW, in conjunction with DfT, will decide whether to amend the timetable or train capacity in response to the consultation.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons it is proposed to reduce the Cardiff to Portsmouth line service over the section between Westbury and Southampton by five trains a day in each direction from December 2006. [59484]

Derek Twigg: The primary service between Westbury and Southampton will remain hourly. Added into this pattern are a number of additional services; it is these which are proposed to be reduced on value for money grounds. First Greater Western (FGW), who will operate the service from December 2006, recently consulted on this timetable. The results of the consultation are being analysed and FGW, in conjunction with DfT, will decide whether to amend the timetable in response to the consultation.

The level of service provided between Southampton and Salisbury is also being reviewed as part of the new South Western Franchise. An option to offer a second train an hour between Southampton and Salisbury (via Chandlers Ford) is being considered.

Vehicle Imports

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much revenue has been collected in tariffs on *(a)* imports of (i) cars and (ii) lorries and *(b)* in total vehicle imports in each year since 1997. [54949]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The information is not available to this level of detail.

Vehicle Registrations

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation to prevent the use of mail collection only postal addresses for the registration of motor vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [60269]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no current plans to introduce legislation to prevent the use of mail collection postal addresses. To do so would have a detrimental effect on businesses such as fleet companies who register large volumes of vehicles with a PO Box address or other mail collection postal address.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many motor vehicles are registered at 25 Duke Street, Chelmsford; and if he will make a statement. [60270]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of vehicles registered at a specific address constitutes personal data and as such cannot be released to anyone not legally entitled to receive it.

Wildlife and Countryside Act

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 on the operation of railway services; and if he will make a statement. [59935]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* This is an operational matter for Network Rail, as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies directly to the infrastructure provider, principally through its maintenance, enhancement and renewal activities and in its capacity as a major landowner. In general, the requirements of the Act do not impact upon the operation of trains.

Network Rail comply with the requirements in terms of protection to species and areas, for example by gaining consent as required, and work with English Nature to assist them meet their target of reinstating Sites of Special Scientific Interest to favourable status.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Case Timings

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Solicitor-General what guidance he has issued to the Crown Prosecution Service on the length of time that should elapse before a case is brought against a suspect. [60651]

The Solicitor-General: There is no specific CPS guidance on the length of time that should elapse before a case is brought against a suspect. However, the Crown Prosecution Service works closely with the police and other agencies to ensure that cases are handled expediently and are brought before a court when all the available evidence is available to support the case.

The Crown Prosecution Service has specific guidelines on timeliness which apply to persistent young offenders whereby cases should be finalised at court within 71 days of arrest.

Additionally, cases which involve the custody of defendants are subject to time limits as specified in Section 22 of the Prosecution of Offenders Act 1985. This is to ensure that cases are progressed expeditiously through the court process and to avoid the need for defendants to remain in custody for excessive periods of time.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports (Iraq)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any of the 20,878 semiautomatic pistols exported to Iraq referred to in the Second Quarterly Report on Strategic Export Controls 2004 had previously been subject to the refusal of an export licence application by an EU member state as defined by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. [59749]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Council of the European Union 'User's Guide to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports' stipulates that information on the central Denial Notification database is classified 'Restricted' and will be treated as such by all Member States. I am therefore able neither to confirm nor deny whether an EU Member State had previously refused the export to Iraq of any of the 20,878 semi-automatic pistols referred to in the Second Quarterly Report on Strategic Export Controls 2004.

I would however make clear that the UK takes its commitments to the EU Code of Conduct very seriously.

Business Links

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to ensure that agencies allocated contracts by regional development agencies for Business Links brokerage models conform to the terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in respect of their *(a)* recruitment, *(b)* subcontracting, *(c)* board membership and *(d)* customer service. [59502]

Alun Michael: Responsibility for such contracts now lie with the Regional Development Agency in each region and I have asked the chief executive each Agency to provide me with information about the steps taken to ensure that Business Links brokerage models conform to the terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in terms of recruitment, subcontracting, board membership and customer service. Once the information is to hand I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Carbon Credits

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government plans to take to promote the inclusion of carbon capture and storage technology as a means of yielding carbon credits. [60633]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK took the initiative in the EU last year with the aim of having Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) qualify for carbon credits under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. We established an ad hoc working group made up of interested EU member countries plus Norway to oversee the production of a report investigating the monitoring and verification guidelines necessary for CCS to qualify for Carbon Credits. This report can be found on the DTI website at:

http://www.dti.govAik/energy/coal/cfft/cct/pub/pdfs/r277.pdf.

This report was presented to the European Commission last Autumn and they have now established a Working Group under the European Climate Change Programme, which includes UK representation, to develop policy recommendations for CCS in the EU ETS. In addition, the UK is working with other countries in the UNFCCC to ensure that CCS projects in developing countries are eligible for carbon credits under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism.

Clear Skies Programme

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons grants under the Clear Skies programme are not available between 5 March and the closure of the scheme on 31 March; and what steps the Government has taken to inform applicants that grants would no longer be made available from 5 March. [59479]

Malcolm Wicks: Under Clear Skies grants finished before the 31 March because all available funds had been allocated to the Programme.

Notice was given on the Programme website about the proposed closure date and time frames for submitting applications.

The new Low Carbon Buildings Programme will supersede Clear Skies in April this year, which will continue to make grants available for the installation of renewable technologies.

Coal-fired Power Stations

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the UK's energy supply was derived from coal-fired power stations in each of the last 10 years. [60632]

Malcolm Wicks: The proportion of electricity supplied from coal in the United Kingdom in each of the last ten years is shown in the table. The table also shows the proportion of primary inland consumption of energy that was used in coal fired power stations.

Percentage

	Proportion of UK electricity supplied by coal	*Proportion of UK inland consumption of energy used in coal-fired power stations*
1996	40	15
1997	33	12
1998	33	13
1999	28	11
2000	31	12
2001	33	13
2002	32	13
2003	35	14
2004	33	13
2005[1]	34	14

[1] The 2005 data are provisional

Source:

Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 2005

Departmental Meetings

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what dates meetings have taken place between his Department and representatives of Asda, including Asda's parent company Wal-Mart, in the last 12 months; and if he will list the participants. [59942]

Alun Michael: Because of the very wide range of goods and outlets involved, the retail sector is affected by more regulations than any other sector. Consequently major retailers will have regular contact with many departments and may also be involved in working and consultative groups. To list every meeting would involve disproportionate cost, so the following information relates to key meetings only. Data privacy legislation make it inappropriate listing participants.

Between 16 March 2005 and 16 March 2006 meetings between DTI and Asda/Wal-Mart took place on:

25 March 2005
5 April 2005
29 April 2005
22 June 2005
22 July 2005
4 August 2005
2 September 2005
16 February 2006

European Institute for Technology

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from businesses and industry on the European Commission's proposal to establish a European Institute for Technology. [58972]

Barry Gardiner: My right hon. Friend has received representations from the Confederation of British Industry. These support the Commission's objectives of improving links between universities and businesses to exploit research better, but they question whether the Commission has proposed the most effective mechanism to achieve these objectives.

European Structural Funds

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes are planned to the *(a)* distribution and *(b)* amount of European Structural Funds in the UK. [60115]

Alun Michael: The amounts of EU Structural Funds to be received by the UK over the next Financial Perspective (2007–2013) were set out in my written statement to Parliament of 20 December 2005 on the agreement achieved in the European Council on 15 to 16 December. The agreement (and that statement) also included specific allocations for regions covered by the Convergence Objective and by phasing-in provisions under the Competitiveness and Employment Objective, namely Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, West Wales and the Valleys, Merseyside and South Yorkshire, and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. We are currently consulting on a draft National Strategic Reference Framework, which will establish key priorities for Structural Fund spending in the UK. As part of the consultation, we are also inviting comments on how to allocate the remaining funds available under the Competitiveness Objective.

Freshwater Biological Association Library/Kritsch Collection

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with *(a)* the National Environment Research Council and *(b)* the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology on their decision to withdraw funding support for the Freshwater Biological Association Library and the Kritsch Collection. [60366]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has had no discussions with either *(a)* NERC or *(b)* CEH on the Freshwater Biological Association Library and the Kritsch Collection. NERC is responsible for determining the details of how funding is allocated to specific activities.

Iraq

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the British companies that the Government have helped win contracts in Iraq since the current conflict began. [59478]

Ian Pearson: The Department does not hold a comprehensive list of all the companies that it has helped secure business in Iraq. However, I will send to the hon. Member a list of UK companies that are known to us to be operating in Iraq and which have given us permission to pass on their names. Many others have asked us not to pass on this information because of commercial confidentiality or security concerns for their staff and operations in Iraq. A number of the companies on the list will have received assistance from UK Trade and Investment.

This information will also be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which 10 areas of employment he estimates to be most short of workers. [59810]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The National Employer Skills Survey (NESS), produced by the Learning and Skills Council, is based on interviews with 27,000 employers and is the most reliable source on worker shortages.

Figures on total job vacancies by occupation can give a misleading picture—for employers within some occupations can fill their vacancies relatively easily. It is the vacancies which employers find hard to fill which reflect a shortage of workers. NESS figures on 'hard to fill vacancies' therefore give the clearest indication of occupations facing a shortage of workers.

The most recent data are for 2004 and show that the occupations with the most 'hard to fill' job vacancies as a percentage of employment were as follows:

	Percentage
Personal Service	2.5
Associate Professionals	1.8
Skilled Trades	1.8
Transport and machine operatives	1.5
Elementary Occupations	1.3

	Percentage
Sales and Customer Service	0.8
Professionals	0.5
Administrative and Secretarial	0.5
Managers and senior officials	0.3

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when *(a)* household grant allocations and *(b)* large scale community and commercial grant allocations under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme will begin. [60060]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* Grants for householders and small-scale community projects will be available when the programme is launched in April. Grants for larger projects will be available once EU State Aids approval has been granted. The Commission has been provided with additional information at their request and we are awaiting their decision.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to overcome the absence of a lead-in time prior to the launch of the Low Carbons Building Programme on 1 April; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the amount of lead-in time available on the amount of business generated for registered installers of the technology. [59480]

Malcolm Wicks: The new programme will be launched in April, industry and key stakeholders have been aware of this for over 6 months.

There should be a limited effect on business for installers as the PV Programme is still accepting grants. Given the time it takes to process applications it is likely the new programme will be up and running by the time grant offers have been given and therefore there will be no gap in business for installers. It should also be noted that there are still a number of outstanding grant installations yet to be completed.

Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak Experiment

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support his Department is providing for the UK Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak experiment at Culham; and if he will make a statement. [59269]

Barry Gardiner: The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) took over responsibility for the funding of the UK fusion programme in April 2003.

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) receives funding for the UK's own national research programme which includes the development of the UK's own fusion device, the Mega-Amp Spherical Tokamak (MAST), and for the UK's contributions to the operation of the Joint European Torus (JET).

UKAEA spends about £7 million per annum on the development of MAST which includes a 20 per cent. contribution from the EURATOM Framework Programme.

Natural Environment Research Council

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the Natural Environment Research Council since 13 March 2006. [60062]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) announced on 13 March 2006 that it will proceed with its proposals for the restructuring of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), with various modifications reflecting issues raised by stakeholders' input to the recent public consultation. CEH is a wholly owned research centre of NERC, and decisions on its future are the responsibility of NERC. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has had no discussions with NERC since 13 March on this matter.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what powers he has to examine decisions taken by the Natural Environment Research Council. [60065]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is one of eight UK Research Councils, established under Royal Charter. It is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry. The Science and Technology Act 1965 gives a power to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to provide sums of money to NERC and to give directions in respect of such sums, but in accordance with longstanding Haldane principles, Research Council decisions on the funding of specific scientific research are taken independently of Ministers.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the capacity of the building industry to meet the demands of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's programme of work between the present time and 2012, with particular reference to large-scale public sector building programmes competing for manpower. [56895]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* This is a matter for the Nuclear decommissioning Authority (NDA). Prior to advent of the NDA in April 2005, the nuclear industry's assessment of its construction skill requirement was made on a site by site basis. The NDA will identify the long term skills requirements for its overall clean up programme in the context of it Strategic plan. In addition, the NDA will tap into the sector skills agreements currently being developed by Cogent (the skills council for the nuclear industry) who for their part have already started a dialogue with organisations such as the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to ensure that provision is made for the UK as a whole.

Nuclear Power

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the review of the operating hours of six nuclear power stations to be completed; and when he expects to receive applications to agree extensions. [59758]

Malcolm Wicks: It would be for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to make any proposals for a lifetime extension of any of their four remaining operational Magnox stations. We have received no such proposals and are unlikely to do so given that the Magnox technology is really very old and there is little, if any, scope for such extensions.

We understand British Energy has taken no decisions about extending the lives of any of its nuclear power stations beyond those dates already announced. Any decisions to seek extensions would be a matter for the company who would need to evaluate the safety, technical and economic cases, within the overall regulatory framework.

Office of Fair Trading

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what total efficiency savings were achieved by the Office of Fair Trading in 2004–05; and whether these count towards current efficiency savings targets. [52813]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading did not quantify efficiency savings during 2004–05. Efficiency savings achieved by the Office of Fair Trading in 2004–05 do not count towards current efficiency savings targets.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much of the efficiency savings targets for the Office of Fair Trading are to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52819]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading has set for itself the following cashable efficiency saving targets:

	Efficiency (percentage	*Value (£ million)*
2005–06	3	1.5
2006–07	5	2.5
2007–08	5	2.5

These cashable efficiency savings will be redirected to meet the increased targets and reform of the consumer credit system.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the target level of employment, expressed as full-time equivalents, is in the Office of Fair Trading by April 2008. [52837]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Following the Chancellor's pre-budget statement on the enhanced future role of the OFT, the OFT are unable to provide a prediction, of a figure for the target level of employment by April 2008, at this time. The OFT expect to be able to do so before the end of December 2006.

Post Offices

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Danny Alexander), of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1866W, on post offices, if he will list the factors that the Department expects to affect the future size of the post office network. [59916]

Barry Gardiner: Factors affecting the future size of the post office network will include: customer usage levels; the success and uptake of new products; the ability to attract new sub-postmasters to take on branches that come onto the market; the potential sustainability of the new ways of service delivery being piloted by Post Office Limited; the level of any support which may be available after 2008; and the outcome of discussions between the Department for Work and Pensions and Post Office Limited on what accounts, other than the Post Office card account, will be available after 2010.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what requests he has made to *(a)* the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, *(b)* the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management and *(c)* Nirex for assessments of the quantity, type and capacity of facilities to handle additional radioactive waste created by new nuclear reactors built and operated in the United Kingdom. [56894]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* No requests have been made regarding specific numbers of facilities. We currently await CoRWM's recommendations.

As part of its work towards making recommendations to Government on the best option or combination of options for long-term management of higher activity wastes, CoRWM has already considered some new build scenarios, drawing technical information from industry sources. The results of this work were published in the CoRWM Inventory in July 2005. CoRWM have confirmed that waste from a new build programme could be technically accommodated within any of the options they have short-listed for long-term waste management.

Renewable Energy

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many households installed solar panels in each year between 2000 and 2005. [58733]

Malcolm Wicks: Under the Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme, which has been running since 2002, the following numbers of households have stalled solar panels.

Financial year	*Number*	*Total amount of grants offered to householders (£)*
2002–03	154	927,650
2003–04	214	1,253,824
2004–05	416	2,524,527
2005–06 to date	392	2,351,723

Solar Photovoltaic Technologies

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the amount of grant funding to be allocated to solar photovoltaic technologies in 2006–07 from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. [60362]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The new programme is technology neutral, there is no specific allocation to any technology. We will be looking to ensure all technologies are supported, but this will also depend on projects that come forward.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total amount of grant funding spent under the Solar photovoltaic Major Demonstration Programme was in 2004–05. [60368]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* £5.99 million has been spent on both Stream 1 and 2 grants to date for the financial year 2004–05.

Unsolicited Telephone Sales Calls

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further plans he has to regulate unsolicited telephone sales calls. [60517]

Alun Michael: Under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, consumers are offered protection from unsolicited telephone sales calls through the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) scheme. This has proved to be an effective deterrent with 11.2 million registrations to date. No one is allowed to make an unsolicited telephone sales call to a subscriber who has either previously notified the caller that they do not wish to receive such calls or has been registered with the TPS scheme for at least 28 days.

Wave Power

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many wave power research and development projects have been financially supported by his Department over the last three years; and at what total cost. [60221]

Malcolm Wicks: Over the last three financial years a total of 13 wave energy projects have been supported under the DTI's Technology Programme. The expenditure in each year is given as follows.

Year in which invoices were paid	*Spend (£)*
2003–04	2,104,141
2004–05	334,651
2005–06	281,347
Total	2,720,139

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Annual Efficiency Gains

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department has taken to realise total annual efficiency gains of at least £4.3 billion by 2007–08. [60624]

Bill Rammell: The Department is reporting steps taken to achieve our efficiency target of £4.3 billion through existing Departmental reporting processes. We reported most recently in the Department's 2005 Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress and steps taken in the 2006 Departmental Report that we expect to publish in May.

Business Education

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to improve and expand business education in universities in the North East. [60009]

Bill Rammell: The Department works mainly through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to deliver business education provision via higher education institutions in England. The following are just some examples of the steps my Department is taking to support business education in universities in the North East.

Preparing students for business through business education.

Professional and other business services[1] was identified as a priority at level 4 in the North East skills action plan, so HEFCE were keen to ensure this subject area received additional student numbers (ASNs) from the managed growth allocation last year. They were identified as one of HEFCE's priorities in the selection process, and in the end they allocated 388 full-time equivalents (25 percent.of the total North East allocation) to business related subjects.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the North East are committed to business and management, not least because leadership has been identified as a key contributor to the economic future of the region. For example, the University of Northumbria is in the midst of expanding its business school in the centre of Newcastle. The school (together with law and design) will be moved into new high profile, high spec premises as part of a strategy to ensure these three key schools gain synergies from closer working through co-location. There are other campus developments across the region that may not directly improve the infrastructure of business studies, but will improve the facilities for business to interact with the university.

More generally, HEFCE have encouraged institutions to think about getting students ready for business through their HEROBC and HEIF funding. Over the years these funding streams have provided placements, developed employability skills, encouraged graduate entrepreneurship, facilitated spin offs, established incubator space and created real links between business and students. Between August 2006 and July 2008, over £9.4 million will go into the North East in HEIF III funding through the core institutional allocations.

Reaching out to business through business education

This is slightly different, as business is the end user. HEFCE have targeted investment in this area through HEROBC and HEIF. The HE business and community interaction survey (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_46/) provides a good breakdown of where the funding has been used in the past, for example to increase the amount of continuing professional development (CPD) and short courses run businesses.

The North East Higher Skills Network (NEHSN)—the region-wide Lifelong Learning Network— will also impact on this in the future as it will aim to increase the skills levels of those at work in the North East in three key employment sectors (manufacturing, health and business). The region successfully bid for £5.5 million last year to establish the NEHSN, and we hope to see activity take over the next year. The network will encourage progression for employees from vocational backgrounds and provide information, advice and guidance on how their careers could be enhanced through further study. It will also create links with employers and Sectors Skills Councils (SSCs) to ensure qualifications are fit for purpose and meet the needs of business. We expect the network to look at ways of accrediting work based learning and also interact with Train to Gain, Business Links and other regional business service providers.

Through previous HEIF rounds, a number of specific employer related initiatives have been established. There is a region wide New Technology Institute that is now funded by the RDA, but which came from a HEFCE funded imitative from 2001. Knowledge House has received several years of funding through HEIF competitions and is a gateway for business as well as research consultancy. More recently two Centres for Knowledge Exchange in the region have been funded.

Sunderland (Global Automotive Technology Exchange—GATE) was established to identify emerging technologies in the automotive sector and develop exploitation routes for the benefit of UK manufacturing industry, involves transferring existing technology from the UK HEI partners to industry, developing technology with industrial partners and promoting these via the GATE partnership. GATE has been successful in supporting joint R and D projects and encouraging academics to become more proactive in seeking out and servicing the requirements in industry (significant rise in the numbers of academics and students engaging in technology transfer). Teesside—Digital Knowledge Exchange (DKE) has helped to develop advanced services in digital media. It has helped Teesside to create a core team of experienced developers, researchers and business people able to respond rapidly to the needs of digital sector. The team also acts as a focus for further activity drawing on additional help from external research teams, academics, graduates, students and partner bodies.

Chemistry

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have graduated from university with a chemistry degree in each year since 1996. [59661]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The latest available information on graduate numbers is given in the following table. Latest figures published by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) for the years since 2004/05 show that entrants to chemistry courses are increasing: students entering full-time chemistry degree courses in autumn 2005 increased by 12.5 per cent. (compared to an overall rise for all subjects of 8.4 per cent.), and early figures for autumn 2006 entry show that applications for chemistry are up by 5.6 per cent. (compared to an overall fall in applications of 2.8 per cent.).

Graduates[1] in chemistry from UK HE institutions

Academic year	*Chemistry*
1995/96	4,145
1996/97	3,755
1997/98	3,395
1998/99	3,625
1999/2000	3,425
2000/01[2]	3,285
2001/02	3,215
2002/03[3]	2,955
2003/04	2,735
2004/05	2,710

[1] Covers all graduates (UK domiciled and overseas).

[2] Figures from 1994/95 to 1999/2000 exclude qualifications obtained from students studying on dormant modes of study. Figures for 2000/01 onwards include these students.

[3] Figures for 2001/02 and earlier are based upon the major subject of the qualification. For 2002/03 onwards, figures by subject are apportioned between the subjects studied. This means that the figures for 2002/03 and later are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record.

Post-Graduate Certificate in Education

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the inclusion of Post-Graduate Certificate in Education students within the university fees regime will operate; and if she will make a statement. [60538]

Jacqui Smith: From 2006 universities and colleges will be able to charge new students tuition fees which can vary between £0 and £3,000. This will replace the current flat rate fixed fee which is currently set at £1,175. The new higher variable fee applies to all students starting teacher training courses in 2006, including those starting a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course. Universities charging the maximum fee will be required to offer bursaries to the poorest students. Students are not required to pay the fees up front and like all other new students, PGCE students are able to apply for a loan for the cost of the fees. The loans are repayable once a student has finished their course and is earning £15,000 or more.

Training bursaries for PGCE students have been increased for 2006/06, with £9,000 available for those training in a priority subject. Eligible low income PGCE students also receive a new maintenance grant of at least £1,200 and up to £2,700, depending upon an income assessment.

School Performance Measurements

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 528W, on school performance measurements, if she will make a statement on recent progress of the piloting of the inclusion of a contextualised value-added measure in the achievement and attainment tables. [59652]

Jacqui Smith: The secondary school achievement and attainment tables contextual value added (CVA) pilot is currently being evaluated. The pilot tables, showing CVA measures for the 430 schools that volunteered to take part in the pilot, were published on 19 January

2006. An evaluation questionnaire was made available on the Department's website and officials have held a series of evaluation conferences with pilot schools and local authorities. I hope to be in a position to announce the outcome of the pilot and the content of the 2006 tables next month.

Student Debt (Newly Qualified Teachers)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department maintains a record of the teacher recruitment incentives available to newly qualified teachers in respect of payment of student debt. [60539]

Jacqui Smith: The Repayment of Teachers' Loans (RTL) scheme repays the student loans of eligible teachers of priority subjects who have been accepted onto the scheme. Newly qualified teachers were accepted onto the scheme between 2002 and 30 June 2005 when it was closed to new applicants, except those who were unable to obtain employment before 30 June 2005 because they were pregnant or had recently given birth. The scheme is administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC) which holds records of individual cases.

Student Debt/Loans

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 595W, on student debt/loans, if she will break down the total figure given for estimated student loans that will be written off into the categories to which she refers. [59867]

Bill Rammell: Of the £2.47 billion (face value) loans issued to students in FY 2004–05, we estimate that over the lifetime of those loans we will write off some £50 million due to the death or permanent disability of borrowers and some £74 million for borrowers whose income does not reach the statutory repayment threshold.

University Lecturers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of whether there have been delays to the award of qualifications arising from the industrial action taken by university lecturers; and if she will make a statement. [59816]

Bill Rammell: We have made no such assessment. It is a matter for higher education institutions (HEIs), as autonomous bodies, to consider how best they can minimise the adverse effects of the current dispute. HEIs are responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including deciding what to pay their own staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government plays no part in this.

The Government would encourage both employers and unions to reach a speedy resolution in relation to the current dispute, to ensure minimal further disruption to students.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Medical Staff (Wellingborough)

Mr. Bone: To ask the Leader of the House pursuant to his oral answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 959, how many of the 1,500 nurses, 670 doctors and 250 consultants are serving the constituents of the hon. Member for Wellingborough. [58967]

Mr. Hoon: The information requested is not collected in that form. My oral answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 959, covered nurses, doctors and consultants "serving his constituents" from the Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland strategic health authority.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Carbon Emissions

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what measures are being taken to offset carbon emissions from the House of Commons estate. [60477]

Nick Harvey: Rather than offset, the concentration of effort has been on more efficient energy use. Some good progress has been made. For example new more efficient boilers were installed on the Estate in 2004 and currently feasibility work is under way to assess methods to increase the level of renewable energy used across the Estate. The Carbon Trust has been working in partnership with the Parliamentary Estates Directorate (PED) to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, help reduce energy consumption and develop a corporate strategy for the management of carbon dioxide. The PED will shortly be discussing a new partnership with the Carbon Trust to start in April 2006. The Commission expects to review progress in this area and consider how far carbon offset is desirable or possible before the summer recess.

Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology Service

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what recent assessment he has made of the performance of the Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology Service. [60596]

Nick Harvey: The Parliamentary ICT service (PICT) came into existence on 1 January 2006, bringing together IT functions that had previously been managed separately. It is therefore too early to make an overall assessment of its performance. The Director of PICT is always ready to discuss areas of particular concern with individual hon. Members.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Airfields

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the status of airfields as previously developed land under the revised Planning Policy Statement 3. [59107]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southport on 20 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 67W.

Departmental Staff (Disciplinary Actions)

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many disciplinary actions against civil servants employed in his Department *(a)* were commenced and *(b)* resulted in a sanction being applied in each of the last five years. [43497]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following the Machinery of Government changes in May 2002.

The ODPM's staff handbook sets out formal procedures for dealing with disciplinary actions involving staff. Disciplinary action can result from 'misconduct' which is broken down into three categories:

Minor misconduct—behaviour that is unacceptable and of sufficient concern that it cannot be dealt with informally, but not serious enough to fall into either of the two other categories;

Serious misconduct—behaviour which by its very nature damages the relationship between the individual and their employer; and

Gross misconduct—behaviour which by its very nature so damages the relationship it would normally be incompatible with continued employment.

Information on the number of disciplinary cases is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Fire and Rescue Service

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what was the average cost of a false alarm attended by the fire and rescue service (FRS) in each FRS area in the last year for which figures are available. [55765]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The latest estimate of the average cost of a false alarm attended by the fire and rescue service is £1,970. The cost of false fire alarms is estimated by calculating the proportion of fire service call-outs that are not related to an incident, and assuming that the proportion of total expenditure by the fire and rescue service on call-outs is attributable to false alarms. This is likely to be an overestimate, as less time and resource is generally used during false alarms than in tackling genuine incidents. Calculations produce a national average figure, but the methodology does not allow us to produce estimates for individual FRS areas.

Licensing

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* restaurants, *(b)* hotels and *(c)* guest houses will no longer receive rural rate relief as a result of the Licensing Act 2003 (Consequential Amendment) (Non-Domestic Rating) (Public Houses in England) Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/591); what the average value of the rate relief was in each category in the latest period for which figures are available; what assessment of the impact of the change on each category of business has been made; and if he will make a statement. [59841]

Mr. Woolas: Local authorities are not required to provide data on the number or breakdown of recipients of rural village shop rate relief, of which relief for public houses is one category. Mandatory and discretional rural village shop rate relief as a whole is estimated to amount to £8.2 million in 2005–05 across all billing authority areas. The Licensing Act 2003 (Consequential Amendment) (Non-Domestic Rating) (Public Houses in England) Order 2006 replaces the definition of "public house" in the Non-Domestic Rating (Public Houses and Petrol Filling Stations)(England) Order 2001. The Licensing Act 2003 replaced the type of licence on which the 2001 definition was based with new arrangements that do not exactly correspond to the previous arrangements, but did not make the necessary consequential amendment.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Denham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will adjust local authority funding to take account of increases in population arising from migrants from EU accession states. [59405]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Government Finance Settlements for 2006–07 and 2007–08 were laid before the House of Commons on the 31 January 2006 and the settlement for 2006–07 was agreed on the 6 February 2006.

For formula grant allocations, the ODPM can only use the best data available on a consistent basis for all authorities that are available at the time. For population, these are the 2003-based population projections and mid-2004 population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics.

Local Government Staff

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what proportion of local government staff are *(a)* male and *(b)* female; [60019]

(2) what percentage of staff in each local government pay band are *(a)* male and *(b)* female. [60018]

Mr. Woolas: The Employers' Organisation's 2005 survey states that local government staff comprises 74 per cent. female and 26 per cent. male staff.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold the information requested. This is because the national pay framework includes a series of pay points linked together in a "spinal column". Each local authority has local responsibility for dividing this spinal column into suitable pay grades.

Office Equipment

Mr. Weir: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* personal computers, *(b)* laptops, *(c)* servers, *(d)* printers, *(e)* scanners, *(f)* photocopiers and *(g)* fax machines (i) his Department, (ii) each (A) non-departmental public body, (B) executive agency and (C) other public body for which his Department is responsible in (1) Scotland, (2) Wales, (3) each English region and (4) Northern Ireland owned in (x) 2003–04 and *(y)* 2004–05. [40104]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ordnance Survey

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether Ordnance Survey has held a contract with Getmapping in the last five years. [59131]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Ordnance Survey has held contracts with Getmapping in the last five years.

Planning Policy Guidelines

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) for what reasons he has changed planning policy guidelines from PPG to PPS3; what representations he has received on these changes; and what reasons underlay the setting out of the proposed changes in an annex to the consultation document; [56817]

(2) what assessment he has made of the implications for general aviation of the change in planning policy for airfields in PPS3; [56816]

(3) what provisions will be made in PPGS3 to ensure that airfields will *(a)* continue to be used for aviation purposes and *(b)* are not classified as brownfield land for housing development. [56818]

Yvette Cooper: The intention to move from existing Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing" (PPG3) to a shorter, clearer planning policy statement for housing was signalled in the planning statement given to the House on 18 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 44–46WS.

The Government's planning reform agenda includes work over time to review planning guidance, and to replace it with more outcome-based statement of national planning policy. Draft Planning Policy Statement 3: "Housing" (PPS3) aims to ensure that the planning system is used to its maximum effect to ensure that everyone has the benefit of a decent home, which they can afford, within a community which is sustainable and in which they want to live and work. Draft PPS3 was duly published for consultation on 5 December 2005 alongside the Government's response to Kate Barker's review of housing supply.

The consultation period for responses to draft PPS3 closed on 27 February. Some 2,000 responses have been received to date. Responses to the consultation will be taken into account in finalising PPS3 and a summary of consultation responses will be published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Ministers website alongside final PPS3.

Annex A of draft PPS3 proposes some clarificatory changes to the definition of previously-developed land currently set out in Annex C of PPG3 and the footnotes to that Annex. I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Southport on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 67W and the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, (question 56090) concerning the effect of these proposed changes.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for his Office set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Office set out in the review. [52794]

Mr. Woolas: Savings from work force reductions will make a major contribution to achieving the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's target of £25 million efficiency savings in administration. As stated in the ODPM (Central) Efficiency Technical Note, published in December 2005, these efficiency gains will be measured by comparing current year administration spend against the 2004–05 baseline.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Office set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52833]

Mr. Woolas: The Spending Review 2004 set the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister a target to achieve at least £620 million in annual efficiency gains by 2007–08. At least two thirds of these must be cash-releasing. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's proposed gains by workstream, and the proportion that are cashable are set out in the following table, as stated in our Efficiency Technical Note in December 2005:

£ million

ODPM (Central) Efficiency proposals, 2007–08	*All*	*Cash releasing*
Administration	25	25
Regional Development Agencies	120	120
Social Housing: New Supply	160	160
Social Housing: Registered Social Landlord spend on capital works, management and maintenance, and commodities	195	0
Fire Modernisation	105	105
Firelink	10	10
Homelessness	125	125
Total	740	485

Funds will be reinvested in the programme areas from which they are saved.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what is the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review; [52851]

(2) what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to achieve a total reduction of *(a)* 400 posts and *(b)* at least 250 headquarters and Government office civil service posts; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52936]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently using a June 2004 baseline for staff numbers, measured in full-time equivalents, against which our targets and progress are measured. The baseline comprises:

	Number
ODPM (central)	2,431
Government offices for the regions	968
Planning Inspectorate and other Executive agencies	1,054
Non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)	3,773
Total	8,226

We use full-time equivalents (not headcount or posts) for setting targets and monitoring progress in order to avoid creating a bias against part-time employment.

In 2004–05 ODPM (central) and the Government office for the regions delivered a reduction of 47 full-time equivalents against a target of 250 by the end of 2007–08. The Executive agencies and NDPBs delivered a reduction over that period of 43 full-time equivalents, giving a total reduction of 90 against a target of 400 by the same date. Further reductions will be reported annually as part of our regular progress reports to OGC. During 2005–06 ODPM (central) has agreed voluntary early severance for a further 82 full-time equivalents which will make a significant contribution to achieving the targets.

ODPM's Efficiency Technical Note sets out how reductions are measured.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* improve social housing procurement methods, *(b)* realise efficiencies in the registered social landlord sector on capital works, management and maintenance and commodities, *(c)* deliver efficiency gains in regional development agencies and *(d)* continue the modernisation of the fire and rescue service; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52922]

Mr. Woolas: The overall target for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minster central efficiency programme is at least £620 million by the end of 2007–08. The programme includes efficiency gains by registered social landlords (RSLs) (but not by local housing authorities). The 2004–05 baselines against which efficiency gains are being measured, savings to date and targets for the relevant heading are as follows:

£ million

	Baseline	*Savings to date*	*Target*
RSL Capital Works	800	64.4	60
RSL Management and Maintenance	1500	74.6	80
RSL Commodities	300	11.5	55
Regional Development Agencies	1552	28	120
Fire Modernisation	2040	38	105

The savings have not yet been fully validated.

Efficiency gains from RSL social housing procurement are not measured separately but are included as appropriate under capital works, management and maintenance, and commodities.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52945]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's efficiency target is to achieve at least £620 million savings by March 2008. As stated in our Efficiency Technical Note we have plans to achieve savings of £740 million by 2007–08. However, the 2004 Spending Review did not set interim targets.

Our target for reduction in civil service posts in ODPM central and the Government offices for the regions is 250 by March 2008. This is currently measured against a June 2004 baseline of 2,431 posts in ODPM central and 968 in Government offices. We do not distinguish between net and gross figures in our reduction target.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has a target to relocate 240 posts out of London headquarters by 2010. There is an interim target to relocate at least 216 posts outside of London and the South East by March 2008.

Sun-bed Tanning

Mrs. James: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what provision is made by local authority-owned leisure centres for complaints from users of their sun-bed tanning equipment relating to *(a)* accidents and *(b)* adverse incidents involving that equipment. [57425]

Mr. Woolas: Procedures to handle complaints from users of facilities at local authority-owned leisure centres are matters for local authorities. As regards complaints leading to claims for compensation, the Department for Constitutional Affairs is coordinating a cross Government programme of work to prevent a compensation culture from developing, and to improve the system for valid claims. Part of this work involves promoting appropriate and proportionate risk management; encouraging defendants such as local authorities to resist bad claims; and making the system more timely, proportionate and cost-effective for valid claims. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, along with other central departments, is feeding into this work.

Terrorism

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was made available to local authorities in *(a)* Manchester, *(b)* Birmingham, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Liverpool, *(e)* Edinburgh, *(f)* Glasgow, *(g)* Cardiff and *(h)* other major cities and towns in the UK (i) to prevent and (ii) to deal with a terrorist incident in 2005–06. [59540]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

In 2005–06 the Government more than doubled its contribution to the cost of local authorities' civil protection activities in England and Wales to £40.7 million. This increase significantly enhanced the capacity of local authorities to deal with the effects of a wide range of emergencies, including terrorism.

The bulk of the £40.7 million was added to formula grant (Revenue Support Grant and national non-domestic rates) which is distributed according to a broadly population-based formula. This is an unhypothecated grant and it is not therefore possible to provide an amount given to each authority for a particular function.

As a result of the devolution settlement, the National Assembly for Wales is responsible for the payment of funding to local authorities in Wales. £2.263 million was therefore transferred to the National Assembly for Wales for distribution to the Welsh unitary authorities. This is currently being delivered by a hypothecated grant mechanism.

The level of civil protection funding for Scottish local authorities and the way it is distributed is the responsibility of the Scottish Executive.

Local authorities also undertake a wide range of mainstream activities which contribute to the prevention of terrorism (eg CCTV installation, community cohesion). Disaggregated figures for these activities in each of the authorities are not available.

Unitary Authorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what studies his Department has evaluated on the performance of unitary authorities. [59498]

Mr. Woolas: None. However the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Best Value Performance Indicator performance data prepared by the Audit Commission show such information by type of local authority.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carer's Allowance

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in Bridgend constituency who were in receipt of carer's allowance in each of the last five years. [59980]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of carers allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 22 March 2006:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in Bridgend constituency who were in receipt of carers' allowance in each of the last five years.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information requested is in the following table:

Number of carers allowance claimants in the parliamentary constituency of Bridgend, as at August[1] *of each year from 2001 to 2005 by gender*

Thousands

		Gender of claimant	
	Total	*Female*	*Male*
2005	0.8	0.6	0.2
2004	0.8	0.6	0.2
2003	0.7	0.6	0.2
2002	0.7	0.5	0.2
2001	0.7	0.5	0.2

[1] 2001 and 2002 figures are as at September. 2003, 2004 and 2005 figures are as at August.

Notes:

1. Only cases in payment are shown (those with underlying entitlement but not actually receiving payment have been excluded).
2. Parliamentary constituencies have been allocated using the ONS postcode directory.

Definitions and conventions:

"-" Nil or Negligible; "." Not applicable; Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and expressed in thousands. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 100 percent samples for detail.

I hope this is helpful

Departmental Information

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to improve the *(a)* quality of management information and *(b)* appraisal of effectiveness within his Department. [49514]

Mrs. McGuire: Improvements to the quality, timeliness and coverage of management information are being made on the back of the introduction of new IT systems under the department's modernisation programme and by a corporate management information service that was introduced in 2003. The Department's effectiveness is assessed in the Departmental Report and Autumn Performance Report, through which it publishes its progress against public service agreement targets. In making these assessments, the Department takes account of expert advice on best practice in measurement and data quality. The Autumn Performance Report published on 15 December 2005 contains the most recent update on delivery of these targets; copies are available in the Library.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many hours *(a)* initial training and *(b)* ongoing training are given to staff who work on disability living allowance fraud cases. [55296]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of Disability Living Allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 22 March 2006:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many hours *(a)* initial training and *(b)* ongoing training are given to staff who work on disability living allowance fraud cases.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Careers Service (DCS).

The information you require is not available in the format you have requested. This is because Disability Living Allowance fraud work involves thousands of generalised staff as well as staff who specialise in fraud in both DCS and Jobcentre Plus. All staff have individual requirements, which are reviewed on an ongoing basis. am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he was first informed of errors within disability living allowance DLA(A) forms; what steps he has taken to make the public aware of those errors; when he expects to rectify the errors; and if he will make a statement. [59493]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance and attendance allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 22 March 2006:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he was first informed of errors within DLA/A (Adult) and DLA/A (Child) forms; what steps he has taken to make the public aware of those errors; when he expects to rectify the errors; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

In December 2005, the DLA claim pack, which was in two parts was revised and the two parts amalgamated to produce a unified claim pack. The guidance notes were also amended to reflect the changes. Subsequent feedback in January 2006 has indicated that the guidance notes are not as clear as they might be with regard to the parts of the claim pack to be completed if a person is claiming under "Special Rules" provisions.

The consequence of any potential confusion is that some parts of the claim pack may be completed unnecessarily. The outcome of the claim would be unaffected by this. DCS will revise the guidance notes to take account of the feedback received at the earliest opportunity, which will be at the next print run due in June 2006, and accordingly does not intend to take any additional interim steps to raise public awareness.

A fuller revision of the DLA claim pack, including guidance notes, is planned for October 2006. As part of that revision the DCS Advisory Forum, on which Macmillan are represented, will be fully consulted.

In addition the DCS were advised on 2 March 2006 that there was a discrepancy between the clerical version and the electronic version of the DLA child claim pack guidance notes. A correction to the electronic version was effected on 15 March 2006 and the notes are now identical to the clerical claim pack guidance notes.

I hope this is helpful.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of new incapacity benefit claims were referred for medical review in the most recent year for which figures are available. [51984]

Mrs. McGuire: Claims to incapacity benefit are initially accepted on the basis of medical evidence but are all subject to medical review to find out whether the person is still incapable of work. Most cases will require a medical examination, but where a person's condition is severe, incapacity may be accepted on the basis of medical or other evidence without the need for an examination.

Information on the number of examinations carried out on new incapacity benefit claims is not available as it is not possible to split initial examinations from the total examination figure which includes initial and subsequent examinations.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research has been *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned by his Department on the mortality rates of individuals claiming incapacity benefit; and if he will make a statement. [53901]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department has not undertaken or commissioned any such research.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of new incapacity benefit claimants in 2005 aged *(a)* over 50 years and *(b)* under 50 years had previously been receiving (i) statutory sick pay and (ii) jobseeker's allowance. [58686]

Mrs. McGuire: The most recent available information is in the following tables.

Incapacity benefit (IB) commencements transferred from statutory sick pay in the period 1 June 2002 to 31 May 2003

Aged under 50	*Percentage of all IB commencements (under 50)*	*Aged 50 and over*	*Percentage of all IB commencements (50 and over)*
57,100	13	57,900	27

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 1 per cent. Sample.

Incapacity benefit (IB) commencements by age and whether person had previously claimed jobseeker's allowance (JSA) within 90 days of IB commencement; first three quarters of 2005

	Commencements previously claiming JSA	*Proportion of all IB commencements (of age group) (percentage)*
Under 50 years of age		
February 2005	22,400	21
May 2005	27,500	26
August 2005	27,400	30
50 years of age and over		
February 2005	5,600	12
May 2005	7,000	14
August 2005	5,400	15

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. Earlier quarters have been updated to include late notified commencements. For this reason the percentage of all IB commencements may be misleading when compared to earlier quarters.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of incapacity benefit claimants reaching the first anniversary of their claim aged *(a)* over 50 years and *(b)* under 50 years left the benefit in the next year in each of the last five years. [58689]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the following table.

Proportion of incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) terminations where the claim ended between the first and second year; by age at termination, as a proportion of all terminations

		Percentage
	Aged	
August	*Up to 50*	*50 and over*
2001	6.1	3.8
2002	5.8	4.0
2003	6.4	2.9
2004	6.2	3.5
2005	6.3	3.6

Notes:

1. Figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance claims, including IB credits only case).

2. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total IB only terminations for May 2004 increased by 33 per cent. in the year following their initial release.

3. Percentages are calculated using the total terminations in that quarter as a denominator.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new claimants for incapacity benefit were aged *(a)* over 50 years and *(b)* under 50 years in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2005. [58690]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) commencements; by age group

		Aged	
Period	*All ages*	*Under 50*	*50 and over*
1 September 1996 to 31 August 1997	997,400	687,100	310,400
1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005	610,200	425,800	184,400

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Figures for the latest year do not include some late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total commencements for the quarter ending May 2004 increased by 18 per cent. in the year following their initial release.

3. New commencements to SDA ceased in April 2001. Some commencements still appear after this date due to the case being re-built.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women in receipt of incapacity benefit owing to mental health conditions in the Easington constituency are aged (i) 20 to 29, (ii) 30 to 40, (iii) 41 to 49 and (iv) 50 to 60 years. [59040]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Easington parliamentary constituency with a primary diagnosis in the 'Mental and Behavioural Disorders' category; August 2005.

	Number
Men	
All ages	1,800
Under 20	—
20 to 29	400
30 to 40	400
41 to 49	400
50 to 60	400
61 to 65	100
Over 65	—
Women	
All ages	1,700
Under 20	—
20 to 29	300
30 to 40	400
41 to 49	400
50 to 60	500
61 to 65	—
Over 65	—

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. '—' means nil or negligible.

3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance claims, including IB credits only cases.

4. Diagnoses are taken from the International Classification of Diseases (ICD10).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed incapacity benefits for *(a)* mental health reasons and *(b)* musculo-skeletal disorders in each year from 1979–80 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [59345]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the format requested. Incapacity Benefit was introduced in April 1995; information is not available broken down by diagnoses for predecessor benefits. The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants with a primary diagnosis in the "Mental and Behavioural Disorders" and "Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue" groups of diagnoses; each August from 1995 to 2005

As at August:	*Mental and Behavioural Disorders*	*Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue*
1995	628,800	645,800
1996	688,400	656,200
1997	754,500	657,500
1998	797,300	629,700
1999	840,100	605,900
2000	889,900	594,300
2001	951,600	592,000
2002	998,700	575,500
2003	1,040,400	561,000
2004	1,078,000	542,600
2005	1,089,100	516,600

Notes:

1. Figures for the years 1995 to 1998 have been produced using 5 per cent. data and have been rated up in accordance with the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance totals.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance claims, including IB credits only cases.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples from 1995 to 1998 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the proportion of those claimants of incapacity benefit who are primarily affected by a mental health problem for which they are receiving treatment. [59854]

Mrs. McGuire: As at August 2005, there were 1,089,100 incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Great Britain whose primary diagnosis was within the 'Mental and Behavioural Disorders' group of diagnoses; this represents 39 per cent. of the case load.

The Department does not have records of the medical treatment benefit claimants receive.

Migrant Workers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when his Department expects to report through the Health and Safety Commission on the implications of increasing numbers of migrant workers in the UK. [58377]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Commission will consider at its July meeting the findings of research carried out for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the health and safety risks migrant workers face. The Commission will use the findings to inform the development of future HSE work in this area, and expects to make a statement after the July meeting on this. It also expects to publish the research results after the July meeting.

Pension Credit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of administering pension credit in 2004–05. [55206]

Mr. Timms: The cost of administering pension credit during the year to March 2005 has been estimated as £237 million. This figure is an approximate assessment only. The Pension Service continues to develop its unit cost information to enable it to provide a more robust and detailed financial analysis of the processing activities for which it is responsible. A modern resource management system is being rolled out across the Department in 2006. Once in place, this new system will support improved costing analysis.

Private Pensions

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what plans he has to ensure that the transfer values of private pensions reflect the actual value of the underlying assets; and if he will make a statement; [58529]

(2) if he will introduce regulations to restrict the scope for deductions applied to private pension assets when they are transferred between providers; [58531]

(3) how much was paid in penalty and transfer charges levied by private pension providers on their clients in each of the last three years; [58569]

(4) what research has been undertaken by his Department into the effects of penalty and transfer charges on people's willingness to take out private pensions; and if he will make a statement; [58570]

(5) what mechanisms are in place to record the penalty and transfer charges levied by private pension providers on their clients; and if he will make a statement. [58571]

Mr. Timms: Private pensions in the form of personal pensions and stakeholder pensions are contractual arrangements between individuals and scheme providers. The Financial Services Authority's (FSA) product disclosure rules for personal pensions require that point-of-sale literature includes a description of the charges that can be incurred and a projection illustrating the potential fund values along with the effect of charges at various points in the product's lifecycle. Amongst other things, this is intended to highlight the effects of any transfer penalties in the early years after purchase.

In 2001 the Government introduced the stakeholder pension to provide good value pensions for people who could not join an occupational pension scheme. One of the features of the stakeholder pension is that where a member wants to transfer out of the stakeholder pension, regulations provide that the scope for charges and deductions is very limited. The FSA's product disclosure rules for stakeholder products reflect these regulatory requirements.

The Government do not routinely collect information on the charges levied by personal pension schemes and the Government have no plans to regulate to control charges set by such schemes.

Welfare Reform Green Paper

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether current incapacity benefit claimants classified as automatically exempt from the personal capability assessment will be required to participate in the revised personal capability assessment process proposed in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work; [51970]

(2) whether the revised personal capability assessment process proposed in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work will apply to existing incapacity benefit claimants. [51972]

Margaret Hodge: Everyone who wants to work, whatever their health condition or disability, should receive the necessary help and support to enable them to work as soon as they are able to do so. The current Personal Capability Assessment process is often viewed simply as a hurdle that must be cleared to receive benefits and, as a consequence, it focuses upon incapacity rather than capability.

In our Green Paper; "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work" we set out our proposals to transform the current assessment process so that it:

provides a professional assessment of an individual's eligibility for financial support based on their functional capability;

identifies those people who are capable of taking part in work-related activity and the support and interventions required to help them get back to work; and

identifies people who are so limited by their illness or disability that it would be unreasonable to require them to undertake any form of work-related activity in the foreseeable future.

For the majority of people, the prospects are good, given the right advice and help. However, we recognise that for others with the most severe limits to their functional capabilities, it would be unreasonable to expect that they engage in work-related activity.

Under the proposals in the Green Paper, this group of people will fall into the new category of people who receive the Support component of the Employment and Support Allowance, and conditionally will not be imposed on them. It will differ from the current 'exempt' group, which it will replace, in that it will not be based on the nature of the specific illness or disability the individual has, but on the severity of the impact of that condition on the individual's ability to function.

Consideration is still being given to whether existing claimants will participate in the revised Personal Capability Assessment. However all existing eligible claimants will have their benefit level protected.

CABINET OFFICE

Cabinet Office Website

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many visitors the Cabinet Office website received between 1 February and 1 March 2006; and how many updates were made to the website during that period. [60163]

Mr. Jim Murphy: During this period, the Cabinet Office website had 48,799 unique visitors who visited the site a total of 160,308 times. The website was updated 876 times.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has to purchase an aircraft for the dedicated use of the Prime Minister; and if he will make a statement. [59419]

Mr. Jim Murphy: In December 2004 my right hon. Friend the then Minister for the Cabinet Office announced an independent review of royal family and ministerial air travel to be led by Sir. Peter Gershon. When Sir. Peter submits his findings the Government will give them careful consideration.

Public Services

Mr. Bone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the delivery of reform of public services. [59873]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The delivery of reform of public services is at the core of most discussions that I have with colleagues in delivery Departments. There are regular discussions on matters related to delivery, both between Ministers attending Cabinet Committee meetings and between Ministers and their officials.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Caravans

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many studies monitoring the contribution of the caravan sector to the Northern Ireland economy have been carried out in the past 20 years. [60459]

Mr. Hanson: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has, over the past 20 years, undertaken two annual surveys per year which identify the revenue spent by visitors and domestic holidaymakers including the caravan sector. NITB has not undertaken any additional, dedicated, surveys among the caravan sector providers over this period, and has no plans to do so.

Estimates of the number of employee jobs in camping sites (including caravan sites) are readily available from the Census of Employment on a biennial basis from September 1995. The latest estimates available relate to September 2003 (123 employee jobs). Information relating to September 2005 will be available in late 2006.

Cross-border Bodies

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost has been of each cross-border body set up under the Belfast Agreement in each year since its formation. [58058]

Angela E. Smith: The total annual expenditure of each of the North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Ltd. is set out in the following table.

Annual expenditure (£)

Body	*2001*[1]	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*[2]
Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission	1,359,000	1,604,000	1,807,000	1,921,000	2,405,000	2,670,000
Waterways Ireland	9,049,217	14,384,425	18,323,736	18,153,737	22,860,034	24,656,903
The Trade and Business Development Body	1,842,000	2,768,000	5,199,000	6,145,000	6,622,523	7,879,962
Special EU Programmes Body	839,419	1,809,101	1,811,475	1,830,432	1,902,785	[4]—
The North/South Language Body[3]	8,609,196	11,799,504	14,352,125	14,548,150	14,916,823	[4]—
The Food Safety Promotion Board	1,742,000	2,662,000	3,969,000	5,600,000	6,000,078	6,287,291
Tourism Ireland Ltd.[5]	n/a	1,188,472	34,354,546	38,428,516	41,572,000	46,181,000

[1] This covers the period 2 December 1999 to 31 December 2000.

[2] The 2005 figures shown are provisional.

[3] The figure quoted for the North/South Language Body for 2002–04 are based on unaudited accounts.

[4] Not yet available.[5] Tourism Ireland Ltd. was only incorporated on 11 December 2000.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average weekly amount of housing benefit paid to tenants in Northern Ireland was in *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector housing in 2005. [59819]

Mr. Hanson: The information is shown in the following table for August 2005.

	Average weekly amount(£)
Public rented sector	51.33
Private rented sector	60.99

Illegal Dumping Unit

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff are employed in the Department of Environment's illegal dumping unit. [60420]

Angela E. Smith: Investigation of incidents of illegal dumping is the responsibility of the Enforcement Team within the Waste Management and Contaminated Land Unit in Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment. There are currently 25 staff within the Enforcement Team, 22 in scientific grades and three administrators.

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of illegal dumping have been referred to the courts for prosecution in each of the last three years. [60422]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the response given to the hon. Member for East Londonderry on Wednesday 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2270W.

Police College (Cookstown)

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his proposals for the capital funding of the planned new police college in Cookstown. [59699]

Mr. Woodward: The Government recognise fully the important role that training plays in the delivery of a policing service to the community and fully supports Patten's recommendation for a new police training college.

The Government are committed to the funding of a new police college and has agreed to provide up to £90 million of capital funding for that purpose. This will allow the main elements of PSNI training to move to the new site at Cookstown.

The Department will continue to work closely with the Police College Project Board to prepare detailed plans based on the substantial funding commitments we have made, while ensuring that work on construction can begin as soon as possible.

Post Office Card Account

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of those in receipt of child benefit in *(a)* Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland use a Post Office Card Account to access the benefit. [60411]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

According to the latest available figures, approximately 7,460 recipients in Belfast used a Post Office Card Account to access child benefit in November 2005, accounting for around 23 per cent. of the total number of recipients.

In Northern Ireland, there were approximately 38,730 recipients who used these accounts in November 2005, accounting for around 17 per cent. of the total number of recipients.

Prisons

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time spent by prisoners on remand in prisons in Northern Ireland was in 2005; and what steps are being taken to reduce that number. [59365]

Mr. Hanson: Statistics for 2005 will be validated and published in June. Provisional figures indicate that the average time for periods spent in custody on remand in prisons in Northern Ireland was 59 days.

Criminal justice agencies through the Delay Action Group, a sub group of the Criminal Justice Board, are engaging in a number of inter-agency initiatives to speed up processing of Crown court cases across the criminal justice system. It is anticipated that this will also have a positive impact on average time spent on remand. Initiatives in place include the PSNI Reducing Delay Strategy, electronic case preparation, reforms within the Forensic Science service and the continuing rollout of the Public Prosecution Service. The Criminal Justice Inspectorate is expected to publish an inspection report relating to delay in the criminal justice system in April.

Ulsterbus Personnel (Assaults)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Ulsterbus personnel were assaulted in the course of their duties during 2005. [59611]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that 35 Ulsterbus personnel were assaulted while at work in 2005.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Africa (Good Governance)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of oil exploration and extraction in *(a)* Mozambique, *(b)* Kenya, *(c)* Nigeria and *(d)* Angola upon (i) poverty reduction, (ii) good governance, transparency and corruption and (iii) human rights. [58821]

Ian Pearson: Oil exploration is being conducted in Kenya and Mozambique. However, this work is at an early stage and it is premature to assess the impacts, which will be influenced by the quantity and potential for exploitation of reserves identified through the exploration.

Oil is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy, providing over 90 per cent. of Nigeria's foreign earnings and 74 per cent. of Government revenues. This underpins the Nigerian Government's work to fight poverty, improve governance and meet the Millenium Development Goals. They have developed a comprehensive economic reform programme to enable them to achieve this which the Government actively supports. The UK also supports Nigeria in its fight against corruption through technical assistance to its Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

With UK support, Nigeria is providing global leadership for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to promote transparency of payments in the oil sector. More broadly, we maintain a close dialogue with the Nigerian Federal and State authorities on security and development in the Niger Delta, which includes support for and other measures to improve accountability and governance.

We see a positive prospect for economic growth and prosperity through oil exploration and extraction in Angola. We are committed to ensuring that such growth promotes poverty reduction, good governance, transparency, the fight against corruption, and human rights. Angola is not yet a signatory of EITI, but has taken a number of encouraging initiatives in this area. Most recently, the Angolan Council of Ministers approved the UN and African Union anti-corruption conventions.

Ascension Island

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on licensing commercial flights between St. Helena and Ascension Island if the former were to build an airport. [56563]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2377–78W.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on granting licences for commercial ventures on Ascension Island. [56564]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2377–78W.

British Council

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the British Council on plans to relocate jobs from Manchester to London. [60147]

Mr. Straw: The British Council has 15 offices around the United Kingdom. It regularly reviews the deployment of staff across these offices. The British Council is currently reviewing the use of its estate across the country with a view to making cost savings where possible. The review will report in June 2006. In parallel, the British Council is undertaking a programme designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its UK-based operational teams. Again it expects to make decisions in June on any necessary staff changes. At present no decision has been made to relocate posts from any one centre to another.

The British Council is operationally independent and any decision on the location and size of its offices is for the British Council's management to make. However, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office remains in close touch with the British Council on this as on other operational matters.

Canada (Seal Hunting)

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his Canadian counterparts on commercial seal hunting in Canada. [60244]

Ian Pearson: My right. hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not yet discussed the Canadian seal hunt with his Canadian counterpart. However, during an introductory telephone call on 27 February 2006, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry raised the issue with the Canadian Minister of International Trade.

Cyprus

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made an estimate of the number of British tourists visiting *(a)* the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and *(b)* Cyprus. [59548]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: According to Republic of Cyprus estimates, there are 1.5 million visits by British citizens to Cyprus every year. We also understand that there are approximately 100,000 visits by British citizens to northern Cyprus every year.

Embassies/High Commissions (Security)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent on the security of embassies and high commissions in each year since 2000. [58983]

Mr. Straw: The overall spend by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on security and guarding services is as follows:

	Amount (£)
2000–01	13,989,479.56
2001–02	16,714,417.76
2002–03	18,747,067.12
2003–04	34,394,158.70
2004–05	77,287,392.84

The FCO can only identify how much of this expenditure was spent on the security of embassies and high commissions at a disproportionate cost. Expenditure on security-related machinery and equipment is not included in these totals, as the expenditure is reported along with non-security related items. The large increase in spending post 2002–03 is primarily due to the cost of keeping the FCO's presence in Iraq but also as a consequence of further measures following the bombing in Istanbul in November 2003.

Emigrants

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens who have moved permanently abroad in each of the last 10 years; and in which countries they live. [60649]

Dr. Howells: We do not hold records of the number of UK citizens who move abroad permanently. However, we can provide an estimate of the number of British nationals living abroad in the last 10 years as shown in the following table:

Estimated size of the British community

	Million
1996	13.3
1997	13.4
1998	13.3
1999	15.8
2000	15.5
2001–02	12.9
2002–03	12.8
2003–04	13.2
2004–05	13.1

These figures are taken from the consular annual returns from overseas posts. There is no requirement for UK citizens to register with British missions overseas and therefore these figures are provided by our overseas posts on the basis of the most reliable information they can obtain e.g. from host government official statistics. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office only holds a breakdown of the 2004–05 figure as follows:

Consular annual return 2004–05: estimated size of the British national community

Country (Total: 156)	*Estimated size of the British community*
Afghanistan	900
Albania	194
Algeria	800
Angola	750
Antigua and Barbuda	2,800
Argentina	5,000
Armenia	60
Australia	2,066,000
Austria	5,447
Azerbaijan	2,800
Bahamas	7,000
Bahrain	7,000
Bangladesh	3,900
Barbados	2,200
Belarus	25
Belgium	55,000
Belize	1,984
Bolivia	270
Bosnia and Herzegovina	400
Botswana	5,500
Brazil	6,192
Brunei	3,000
Bulgaria	800
Burma	130
Cambodia	1,000
Cameroon	300
Canada	2,400,000
Chile	15,397
China (including Hong Kong)	3,752,031
Colombia	3,050
Costa Rica	2,000
Croatia	900
Cuba	160
Cyprus	60,000
Czech Republic	3,000
Denmark	13,000
Djibouti	20
Dominican Republic	600
East Timor	50
Ecuador	800
Egypt	10,989
El Salvador	—
Eritrea	—
Estonia	200
Ethiopia	731
Fiji	500
Finland	2,643
France	301,000
Gambia	2,000
Georgia	202
Germany	132,872
Ghana	3,500
Greece	40,000
Grenada	2,500
Guatemala	1,200
Guinea	—
Guyana	2,000
Haiti	—
Honduras	—
Hungary	2,700
Iceland	800
India	31,800
Indonesia	5,000
Iran	2,100
Iraq	2,000
Ireland	103,476
Israel	35,000
Italy	50,500
Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire)	—
Jamaica	4,500
Japan	26,000
Jerusalem	20,000
Jordan	2,000
Kazakhstan	3,500
Kenya	20,000
Korea (North)	11
Korea (South)	3,000
Kuwait	4,500
Laos	—
Latvia	400
Lebanon	14,774
Lesotho	350
Libya	3,500
Lithuania	150
Luxembourg	4,580
Macedonia	145
Madagascar	300
Malawi	4,500
Malaysia	6,000
Malta	6,000
Mauritius	1,560
Mexico	14,450
Moldova	75
Mongolia	200
Morocco	1,450
Mozambique	900
Namibia	1,750
Nepal	800

Consular annual return 2004–05: estimated size of the British national community

Country (Total: 156)	*Estimated size of the British community*
Netherlands	70,600
New Zealand	450,000
Nicaragua	—
Nigeria	5,548
Norway	15,000
Oman	6,500
Pakistan	85,000
Panama	220
Papua New Guinea	—
Paraguay	1,000
Peru	1,250
Philippines	15,000
Poland	8,400
Portugal	24,204
Qatar	6,000
Romania	4,500
Russia	5,895
Rwanda	—
Saudi Arabia	19,000
Senegal	200
Serbia and Montenegro	300
Seychelles	1,250
Sierra Leone	1,000
Singapore	17,000
Slovakia	700
Slovenia	400
Solomon Islands	85
South Africa	750,000
Spain	677,000
Sri Lanka	2,500
St. Lucia	1,000
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	700
Sudan	473
Swaziland	1,500
Sweden	14,500
Switzerland	28,700
Syria	1,238
Tajikistan	200
Tanzania	6,870
Thailand	35,700
Tonga	100
Trinidad and Tobago	5,000
Tunisia	800
Turkey	9,550
Turkmenistan	70
Uganda	2,483
Ukraine	650
United Arab Emirates	115,000
Uruguay	900
USA	1,380,200
Uzbekistan	127
Vanuatu	145
Venezuela	2,000
Vietnam	2,150
Yemen	6,000
Zaire	230
Zambia	8,000
Zimbabwe	13,000
Total	13,115,406

Hezbollah

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the role of Hezbollah in terrorist activity in *(a)* southern Lebanon and *(b)* the Palestinian Territories. [60501]

Dr. Howells: We are not aware of any involvement by Hizballah in terrorist activity in southern Lebanon. However, we remain very concerned by Hizballah's support for terrorist activity within the Occupied Territories.

Jericho Prison

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Israel about its attack on the prison in Jericho; and if he will make a statement. [59900]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary called the Israel Minister for Foreign Affairs on 14 March to urge restraint. Our ambassador in Tel Aviv also called the Israeli Authorities on two separate occasions on 14 March to ask for assurances that the six detainees would not be harmed. On 15 March, our ambassador spoke to the Israeli Authorities requesting: access to the ex-Jericho prisoners by representatives of the International Committee Red Cross; assurances that the prisoners would have access to lawyers; and that any trial for the prisoners would be fair and transparent.

Libya

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his most recent assessment is of Libya's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programme; and if he will make a statement. [60212]

Dr. Howells: Libya signed the historic agreement to renounce all of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programmes in December 2003. We have since seen no indication that Libya has attempted to restart its abandoned programmes.

Together with the United States, we continue to assist Libya with the destruction and removal of all components of its WMD programmes, and to promote the engagement and redirection of its WMD personnel into civilian fields.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of human rights in Libya since 2003; and if he will make a statement. [60213]

Dr. Howells: The Government remain concerned about the human rights situation in Libya.

We welcome the opening of a dialogue between the Libyan authorities and groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and progress made in the joint programme on prison management between the Libyan Secretariat of Justice and the International Centre for Prison Studies, financed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Global Opportunities Fund. We also welcome the abolition of the Revolutionary Guards Courts, the recent debate in the Basic People's Congresses on the possible abolition or further restriction of the death penalty, and the release of political prisoners this year.

The Government will continue to work with the Libyan authorities to encourage them to move towards internationally accepted standards on human rights and the rule of law.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether Libya has complied with all its obligations in respect of Lockerbie; and if he will make a statement; [60215]

(2) how much compensation Libya has paid to the families of those who died on the Pan-Am flight at Lockerbie; and if he will make a statement. [60216]

Dr. Howells: Libyan co-operation has resulted in the conviction of Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed Al Megrahi, who is currently serving a 27-year sentence in Greenock Prison. Libya has also paid out US $8 million to each of the victim's families. A further US $2 million will be paid to each of the victim's families once the United States removes Libya from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The lawyers representing the families of the victims negotiated the financial settlement. This was thought to provide a much better settlement than Government to Government negotiations.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Libyan authorities about the freedom of Libyan journalists and political prisoners; and if he will make a statement. [60217]

Dr. Howells: There have been no ministerial discussions. The Government remain concerned about the lack of freedom of expression in Libya, including a free media. We have welcomed the release of 14 political prisoners in January 2006 and hope for further releases. We will continue to monitor and raise these issues with the Libyans.

The Government also welcome the opening of dialogue between the Libyan authorities and groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Palestinian Authority

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made to the Palestinian Authority about the destruction of the British Council building in Gaza. [60502]

Dr. Howells: I spoke with Manuel Hassassian, Head of the UK Palestinian General Delegation, on 15 March to express my concern at the damage caused to the British Council buildings in Gaza and Ramallah. Our Consul General in Jerusalem also raised his concerns with senior members of the Palestinian Authority. We were grateful for the initial protection offered by Palestinian Security Forces which allowed the building in Gaza to be evacuated. However we regret that stronger measures could not have been deployed to prevent the destruction of facilities designed to support the Palestinian people.

Prism IT System

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what grounds the Department is making a claim against Capgemini for lack of sufficient memory in the Prism IT system; and if he will make a statement. [59449]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has been working with both Oracle and Capgemini to address issues connected with performance of its Prism system. A number of improvements are now in train, including upgrading the memory of the system. The FCO maintains a close and constructive dialogue with Capgemini about all contractual matters. Given the ongoing nature of discussions it would not be appropriate for me to give further details at this stage.

Rafik Hariri

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of Syrian compliance with the investigation into the murder of Rafik Hariri. [60500]

Dr. Howells: The second report of the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission's (UNIIIC) on 12 December 2005 highlighted Syrian non-compliance with the UNIIIC. In response to this report, United Nations Security Council resolution 1644 was adopted on 15 December, which underscored Syria's obligation and commitment to co-operate fully and unconditionally with the UNIIIC.

The UNIIIC's most recent report on 15 March stated that an understanding had been reached between the UNIIIC and the Syrian Government on the operational modalities with regards future co-operation and that this understanding will be tested in the upcoming months.

We urge Syria to co-operate fully and unconditionally with the requests of the UNIIIC, and look forward to receiving the UNIIIC's next report, due in June 2006.

Slavery

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will advocate to non-signatory countries ratification of the United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956. [60488]

Ian Pearson: The Government is in the process of considering whether to lobby non-signatory countries on the ratification of the 1956 UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, as part of its activities to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the passing of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 2007.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to his counterparts in other countries *(a)* to ratify international standards which prohibit slavery and *(b)* to introduce stronger international mechanisms to monitor and report on compliance with these standards. [60489]

Ian Pearson: As my hon. Friend will be aware, the Government are committed to marking the 200th anniversary of the passing of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 2007. The Government are currently considering what activities they will pursue to commemorate this event, including those suggested by my hon. Friend.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent to protect endangered species on St. Helena and the surrounding British islands for each of the last seven years. [56803]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since 2004, St. Helena and her dependencies have received environmental funding from the joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Department for International Development Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) as follows.

	£
2005–06	437,000
2004–05	207,090

In addition, Ascension Island received £500,000 for a seabird restoration project in 2003–04 funded through the Environmental Fund for the Overseas Territories, the precursor to OTEP.

Figures for 1999 to 2002 are not centrally held. To obtain them would incur disproportionate costs.

US (Northern Ireland Immigrants)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people from Northern Ireland he estimates to be living illegally in the United States. [59817]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold information about the number of people living illegally in the United States.

WPC Yvonne Fletcher

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what progress has been made by the joint UK-Libyan investigation announced on 7 April 2004 into the murder of WPC Yvonne Fletcher; and if he will make a statement; [60208]

(2) what discussions he has had with British and Libyan representatives about their investigation of the death of WPC Fletcher; and if he will make a statement. [60211]

Dr. Howells: The investigation of the death of WPC Fletcher remains a high priority for the Government. We remain in constant touch with the Metropolitan Police Service and continue to make representations to the Libyans authorities to move forward with the investigation.

We are hoping to see movement on the investigation in the near future and will continue to remind the Libyans of the need to allow closure for the family of WPC Fletcher.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits to Tripoli have been made by the Metropolitan police team investigating the death of WPC Yvonne Fletcher since April 2004; and if he will make a statement. [60209]

Dr. Howells: The Metropolitan Police Service visited Libya in April 2004 and again in September 2004.

The investigation remains a high priority for the Government and we wish to see a satisfactory conclusion to the investigation

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the budget is of the Metropolitan Police team investigating WPC Yvonne Fletcher's death; and if he will make a statement. [60210]

Dr. Howells: No specific budget has been agreed for the investigation. Operating costs are funded through anti-terrorist funds and subsequently justified for each part of the investigation.

The investigation remains a high priority for the Government and we wish to see a satisfactory conclusion to the investigation.

TREASURY

Air Passenger Duty

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the air passenger duty will be used to fund international development objectives. [60314]

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to introduce an air ticket levy to provide funding for international development projects. [60591]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK is committed to developing innovative financing mechanisms to support accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and has announced that it will hypothecate part of its existing air passenger duty to provide a long-term stream of finance to the International Finance Facility (IFF). The size of the UK contribution will be announced when the IFF is launched.

With the IFF, the equivalent of the 0.7 per cent. ODA-GNI target could be achieved as early as 2008–09.

Arms Exports Controls

John Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been prosecuted for breaches of arms exports controls in each of the last five years. [52177]

Dawn Primarolo: Since 1 April 2000 three individuals and one limited company have been prosecuted for breaches of strategic export controls—one in each of the years 2001–02, 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. All were convicted.

John Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many breaches of the arms exports controls have been reported in each of the last five years; and what assessment he has made of the extent to which this figure accurately reflects the actual number of breaches that took place. [52178]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC calculate breaches of the arms export controls as the total number of:

(a) Export seizures of military and dual-use goods, goods subject to sanctions and arms embargoes, and civilian firearms; and

(b) Unlicensed exports referred to HMRC by Compliance Officers from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Financial Year	*HMRC seizures*	*Referrals from the DTI*	*Total number of breaches*
2000–01	120	30	150
2001–02	80	27	107
2002–03	67	21	88
2003–04	63	3.1	94
2004–05	37	28	65

HMRC assess that the majority of UK exporters comply with the export control legislation and that most breaches involve goods that would have been granted an export licence had the exporter applied for one.

Cancer

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* incidence and *(b)* survival rate for (i) ovarian, (ii) lung, (iii) bladder, (iv) breast, (v) bowel, (vi) prostate, (vii) throat, (viii) mouth, (ix) stomach and (x) testicular cancer were in (A) England, (B) the North East and (C) the Tees Valley in the most recent period for which figures are available. [59931]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 22 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the *(a)* incidence and *(b)* survival rate for (i) ovarian, (ii) lung, (iii) bladder, (iv) breast, (v) bowel, (vi) prostate, (vii) throat, (viii) mouth, (ix) stomach and (x) testicular cancer was in (A)England, (B) the North East and (C) the Tees Valley in the most recent period for which figures are available.

The most recent available figures for cancer incidence are for 2003. Figures requested are given in the following table for England, the North East and the Strategic Health Authority of county Durham and Tees Valley.

Incidence rates (per 100,000 population) of selected cancers registered in England, the North East[1] and County Durham and Tees Valley[2], 2003

		Male			*Female*		
Site[3]	*ICD 10 code*	*England*	*North East*	*County Durham and Tees Valley*	*England*	*North East*	*County Durham and Tees Valley*
Lung	C34	71.8	100.4	89.9	48.1	74.7	62.6
Bladder	C67	24.1	27.2	25.7	9.4	11.3	10.5
Breast	C50	1.2	1.2	1.4	143.5	144.9	134.0
Bowel	C18-C21	63.5	79.1	73.2	51.2	53.6	51.4
Throat	C13-C14	0.8	1.7	2.0	0.5	0.6	0.0
Mouth	C04-C06	2.3	3.7	3.4	1.5	1.8	1.7
Stomach	C16	17.6	26.0	23.9	9.8	14.0	13.7
Testis	C62	6.1	4.8	4.5	—	—	—
Ovary	C56-C57	—	—	—	22.1	1.0	24.1
Prostate	C61	109.8	117.4	113.2	—	—	—

[1] Government office for the region

[2] Strategic Health Authority

[3] Cancers registered in 2003 are defined by codes in the International Classification of Diseases. Tenth Revision (ICD 10). Therefore, lung cancer is defined by code C34, bladder cancer by code C67, breast cancer by code C50, bowel cancer by codes C18 to C21, throat cancers by CT3 to C14, mouth cancer by codes C04 to C06, stomach cancer by code C16, cancer of the testis by code C62, cancer of the ovary by code C56 to C57 and prostate cancer by code C61

Source:
Office for National Statistics

The latest nationally comparable survival rates for England, Government Office Regions, and Strategic Health Authorities, are one-and five-year relative rates for patients (aged 15–99) diagnosed in 1995–97 and followed up to the end of 2002.

These are available on the National Statistics website for (i) ovarian, (ii) lung, (iii) bladder, (iv) female breast, (v) colon, (vi) prostate and (ix) stomach cancer. Equivalent figures are not available below national level for the other sites requested:

http://www/statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vink=11991&Pos=4&ColRank=1&Rank=272

For England, survival rates are available for all the sites requested (except mouth) for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1998–2001 followed up to the end of 2003. These rates are available on the National Statistics (NS) website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vink=8982&Pos=4&ColRank=1&Rank=272

In this publication throat cancer is referred to as cancer of the larynx.

Economic Growth

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what analysis he has undertaken of the factors behind economic growth over the next two years for *(a)* the Eurozone and *(b)* the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [60144]

John Healey: A full analysis of economic prospects is contained in the 2006 Budget report which is being published today.

High Fat Foods

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on imposing a tax on high fat foods; and if he will make a statement. [60655]

Dawn Primarolo: Representations are made to Treasury Ministers and officials on a wide range of issues by a variety of organisations and individuals.

As the Wanless Review 'Securing Good Health for the Whole Population' discusses, there are difficulties of principle and practice with using tax instruments to promote public health. In particular, unlike with smoking where any consumption can have damaging effects, the consumption in moderation of most foodstuffs can be to the benefit rather than the detriment of an individual's health.

Marginal Taxation Rates

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what statistics the Government collects on effective marginal taxation rates; [60603]

(2) whether the Government *(a)* publish and *(b)* produce graphs showing effective marginal taxation rates against gross earnings. [60605]

Dawn Primarolo: Statistics on income tax liabilities by marginal tax rates are available in Table 2.5 'Income tax liabilities by Income Range' which is available on the HM Revenue & Customs internet website at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income tax/2 5dec05.xls

The information in the table is based upon the 2003–04 Survey of Personal Incomes projected forward to 2005–06 in line with the December 2005 pre-budget report.

Information on effective marginal deduction rates is available in Tax Benefit Models' which are available oh the Department for Work and Pensions website at:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tbmt.asp

Information on the number of families facing high marginal deduction rates can be found in Table 4.2 "The effect of Government's reforms on high marginal deduction rates" on page 89 in the HM Treasury's December 2005 pre-budget report. Copies of the Pre-Budget Report are available in the House of Commons Library or on the HMT website at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pre_budget_report/prebud_pbr05/prebud_pbr05_index.cfm

Marine Insurance

Mr. Malik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the implementation of the EU Directive on Insurance Mediation on the ability of the freight forwarding sector to provide marine insurance. [60567]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Treasury is aware of the concerns that have been expressed by the freight forwarding sector, and has met industry representatives to discuss their concerns.

The FSA will begin a review of the effectiveness of the general insurance regime in April 2006. This will include seeking feedback from firms and consumer research.

Ministerial Conference (Paris)

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the outcome was of the ministerial conference in Paris of 28 February and 1 March 2006 on innovative sources of finance for development aid; and if he will make a statement; [60287]

(2) what plans he has for the disbursement of funds from the proposed International Finance Facility to be funded by an air ticket levy; [60309]

(3) why the UK is not listed in the communiqué summary as one of the countries which has agreed to provide financial support for the International Drug Purchase Facility; [60312]

(4) what steps he plans to take in the next 12 months to develop innovative financing instruments to fund the Millennium Development Goals. [60323]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Chancellor of the Exchequer issued a written ministerial statement on Innovative Financing for Development on 2 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 29WS, following his attendance at the Paris Ministerial Conference.

The UK Government recognises that in order to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, additional resources are urgently needed. The UK is, therefore, committed to developing innovative financing mechanisms, in particular the International Finance Facility (IFF) and the pilot IFF for Immunisation (IFFIm).

In September last year, the IFFIm was launched with contributions from France, Italy, Spain, Sweden and now Norway and Brazil, as well as the UK. By frontloading aid and investing an extra $4 billion in vaccination now, the IFFIm is expected to save a total of 10 million lives, including 5 million children before 2015. France has reiterated its support for this important initiative and will contribute an average of $100 million a year over 20 years. The IFFIm is now so advanced that the first bonds will be issued within a few months, and the IFFIm will begin purchasing vaccines and delivering these to the poorest countries in 2006.

Given the scale of the challenge for reaching the MDGs by 2015, France and the UK have agreed jointly to establish a working group to consider the implementation of an IFF going to health and education, among other sectors, which will be partly funded by an air ticket levy.

The UK has also agreed to support the proposal for an International Drug Purchase Facility, which will provide greater access to those in developing countries to much-needed drugs to tackle HIV/AIDS and malaria.

National Insurance Fund

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what multiple of the minimum working balance of the National Insurance Fund he considers necessary to retain in support of state pensions and the national health service. [60642]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The National Insurance Fund is used to fund contributory benefit expenditure. I refer the right. hon. Gentlemen to paragraph 20 of the Report of the Government Actuary on the drafts of the Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 2006 and the Social Security (Contributions) (Re-rating and National Insurance Funds Payments) Order 2006.

Primary Care Trusts (Financial Deficits)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of alleviating the financial deficits in primary care trusts from the sums available in the National Insurance Fund above the statutory minimum reserve. [60641]

Dawn Primarolo: The National Insurance Fund (NIF) is used to fund contributory benefit expenditure and there are no plans to change this.

Tax Credits

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many households in *(a)* Bedfordshire and *(b)* the parliamentary constituency of Mid-Bedfordshire have received overpayments of (i) working tax credits and (ii) child tax credits in each year since the credits were introduced; and if he will make a statement; [60229]

(2) how many households in *(a)* the county of Bedfordshire and *(b)* the UK are receiving child tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [60230]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to her on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 321–2W.

Estimates for 2004–05 of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards, including information on overpayments and underpayments by constituency, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2004–05 are due to be published in May 2006.

Taxpayer Statistics

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many *(a)* starting rate, *(b)* basic rate and *(c)* higher rate taxpayers there were in (i) Scotland and (ii) the UK in the most recent year for which figures are available; [60536]

(2) how much revenue was raised in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland from (i) starting rate, (ii) basic rate and (iii) higher rate income tax in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will estimate the revenue that will be raised in each case in (A) 2006–07, (B) 2007–08 and (C) 2008–09. [60522]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest information for Scotland is in the following table.

2003–04

	Starting rate	*Saver's rate*	*Basic rate*	*Higher rate*
Number of taxpayers (Scotland) (£000)	280	60	1,930	210
Amount of income tax liability (Scotland) (£ million)	40	40	4,610	3,400
Amount of income tax liability (UK) (£ million)	490	630	52,880	57,130

Information on the number of taxpayers by marginal tax rates for the UK is available in Table 2.1 'Number of individual income taxpayers', which is available on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/2_1dec05.xls.

The information is based upon the 2003–04 Survey of Personal Incomes.

Projected revenue estimates broken down by Scotland and other UK countries/regions and by tax bands for 2006–07 will be available in May 2006. Projections of income tax receipts for subsequent years are normally prepared covering the whole of the UK and separate estimates by country and tax band are not available.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Libraries

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what assessment she has made of the merits of library self-service systems; and if she will make a statement; [60293]

(2) what steps she is taking to encourage local authorities to install library self-service systems; and if she will make a statement. [60294]

Mr. Lammy: There has been no formal assessment. In the right locations self-service issues can speed user throughput, free-up staff for other public facing duties and, in conjunction with other technology, aid the effective and efficient management of stock.

However, there are known to be a number of potential issues around the installation of self-service facilities in public libraries. As well as the cost of the equipment "line", these encompass such things as the possible need for the re-design of library layouts, including their entrances, and the reluctance of some users to engage with the new equipment.

These issues will be different in each location, so the parent authorities are best placed to weigh up the cost-effectiveness of installing self-service issue facilities in their libraries.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many self-service library systems there are in England; and if she will make a statement. [60514]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was collected in public library fines in each London borough in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [60556]

Mr. Lammy: The table shows how much was collected in public library fines by local authorities across all London boroughs in each of the last five years. This information is drawn from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Public Library Statistics Actuals. The CIPFA statistics show totals for individual library authorities. Copies are held in the House of Commons Library.

	Overdue charges across all London boroughs (£)
2000–01	3,114,476
2001–02	3,129,331
2002–03	2,974.082
2003–04	2,834,162
2004–05	2,758,965

Olympic Lottery Distributor

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who made the final decision to appoint the chair of the Olympic Lottery Distributor. [58952]

Tessa Jowell: The appointment of the chair of the Olympic Lottery Distributor was a public appointment. The final decision was taken by me, after consultation with the Mayor of London and the British Olympic Association. This is consistent with the requirements set out in Schedule 5 to the Horserace Betting and Olympic Lottery Act 2004. The appointment was made following an open competition and taking account of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. The decision was governed by the overriding principle of selection based on merit and by the well-informed choice of individuals whose abilities, experience and qualities matched the need of the public body in question.

Physical Activity

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department has spent on *(a)* promoting regular physical activity and *(b)* physical activity projects since 1997. [59950]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England is the primary distributor of funding for community and grass roots sport in England.

In the period since 1997 Sport England has distributed £2.4 billion Lottery funds and over £400 million Exchequer funding for promoting physical activity and sport.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what definition her Department uses of a small firm. [59291]

Mr. Lammy: There is no standard definition of a 'small firm'. However, commonly used in DCMS is the notion of 'small and medium sized enterprises' or 'SMEs'. These are often defined as organisations having 250 employees or less. However, this is not set in stone and definitions of small firms or SMEs vary depending on the context.

Theatre Museum

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions have taken place between her Department and the trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum regarding the proposed closure of the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden. [59939]

Mr. Lammy: The Theatre Museum review currently underway is considering the options for where, and how best, to display the Theatre Museum's Collection. The final decision is a matter for the Trustees of the V&A, who have not raised the issue directly with the Department. The Museum continues to keep the Department updated on the position.

World Heritage Website

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the running costs of the UK world heritage website were in 2005. [60169]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible to give a figure for the running costs of the UK world heritage website in 2005 as the costs of developing and operating this website are contained in the total figure for all the Department's websites. In 2005 this was £47,000 which covered all 17 of the Department's websites.

DEFENCE

Afghan Poppy Farmers

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the potential for violence from Afghan poppy farmers as a consequence of the eradication of their fields. [57714]

Mr. Ingram: We continuously monitor and assess potential threats to our forces. Afghan-led poppy eradication is an important element of the Government of Afghanistan's strategy for the elimination of narcotics production and trafficking. To reduce the potential for resistance from Afghan farmers affected by eradication, it is essential to target wealthy producers in particular ("the greedy not the needy") to offer opportunities to develop alternative rural livelihoods, or to persuade farmers to opt for legal livelihoods where they are already available.

Darfur

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department is willing to commit troops to a UN peace-enforcement mission to Darfur. [58847]

Mr. Ingram: We fully support the proposed transition from the AU monitoring mission to a UN peacekeeping mission. MOD currently has four personnel contributing to the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS). Furthermore, we have deployed a military officer to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to assist with strategic planning. However, given our present commitments we are not planning to deploy frontline troops to Darfur. Any further requests for specific assistance will be considered on a case by case basis.

Defence Intelligence Staff

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many persons in the Defence intelligence staff have been found to have taken actions without proper authorisation in each year since 1997; [60174]

(2) what mechanism his Department has in place to identify actions taken by the Defence intelligence staff without approval from *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* the chief of Defence intelligence where such approval is required. [60199]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* All military and civilian personnel of the Defence intelligence staff (DIS) in the Ministry of Defence are required to undertake duties as detailed in their terms of reference. DIS civilian personnel are required to conform to the terms of the 'Civil Service Code' and departmental procedure on conduct and meeting standards of behaviour expected of public servants, in conjunction with departmental guidance on the handling of matters of conscience and the reporting of concerns at work. Military personnel of the DIS are guided in the performance of their duties by Queens Regulations.

Information is not held in the form requested, but where the DIS are aware of any action being taken without proper authority, disciplinary or other appropriate action is taken.

Information is not held in the form requested, but where the DIS are aware of any action being taken without proper authority, disciplinary or other appropriate action is taken.

Equipment Suitability

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Lynx AH Mk7, *(b)* Lynx AH Mk9 and *(c)* Gazelle helicopters the armed forces have; and how many are fit for purpose. [57477]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is shown in the table.

Aircraft Type	*Total fleet*	*Unit operating fleet*	*Fit for purpose*
Lynx Mk 7	86	63	42
Lynx Mk 9	22	14	10
Gazelle	119	63	42
Total	227	140	94

The Total Fleet represents the total number of aircraft held by the armed forces and includes those currently in repair and those designated as redundant/unrepairable. The Unit Operating Fleet (UOF) refers to those aircraft located at front line and training units. Fit for purpose describes an aircraft which is part of the UOF and available, reliable, airworthy and capable of carrying out its planned mission on a given date. The figures used are current as of 9 March 2006.

Harrier Deployment

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when RAF Harrier jets *(a)* were first deployed to Afghanistan and *(b)* are due to be withdrawn. [57402]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The UK's Harrier GR7 detachment in Afghanistan commenced operations in September 2004. On current plans, they are due to be withdrawn on 30 June 2006.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 1587W, on post traumatic stress disorder, how many ex-service personnel claimed for a war pension where one of the claim conditions to the individual's service was post traumatic stress disorder or a related condition in the 12 month period between 1 October and the following 30 September in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [53817]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* It is not possible to provide medical condition statistics broken down by such broad categories such as 'post traumatic stress disorder or related conditions'. However it is possible for us to provide data concerning the number of claims received that include specific medical conditions, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Between 1 October 2004 and 30 September 2005, 290 ex-service personnel made a War Pensions first claim where the claimed conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". 185 ex-service personnel made a War Pensions further condition claim, where the further conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder".

For the same period 2003 to 2004, there were 280 first claims where conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". There were also 210 further condition claims.

For the same period 2002 to 2003, there were 335 first claims where conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". There were also 260 further condition claims.

For the same period 2001 to 2002, there were 380 first claims where conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". There were also 230 further condition claims.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 1587W, on post traumatic stress disorder, how many ex-service personnel successfully claimed for a war pension where one of the accepted conditions to the individual's service was post traumatic stress disorder or a related condition for the 12 month period between 1 October and the following 30 September in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [53818]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* It is not possible to provide medical condition statistics broken down by such broad categories such as 'post traumatic stress disorder or related conditions'. However it is possible for us to provide data concerning the number of claims received that include specific medical conditions, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Between 1 October 2003 and 30 September 2004, there were 180 successful first claims where conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". There were also 150 successful further condition claims.

For the same period 2002–03, there were 225 successful first claims where conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". There were also 175 successful further condition claims.

For the same period 2001–02, there were 290 successful first claims where conditions included "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". There were also 160 successful further condition claims.

Note that a successful claim includes ongoing War Pension awards, gratuities and nil awards.

Royal Navy

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Navy *(a)* ships have a home port in Scotland and *(b)* facilities are maintained in

Scotland; what the associated running costs associated with each have been in each year since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [59431]

Mr. Ingram: The vessels, which are currently baseported at HMNB Clyde are shown in the following table:

Detail	*Number and class of vessels*
HMS Brocklesbury, HMS Blyth, HMS Grimsby, HMS Pembroke, HMS Penzance, HMS Ramsey, HMS Shoreham	7 Mine Counter Measures Vessels
HMS Sovereign, HMS Sceptre, HMS Superb	3 Swiftsure Submarines
HMS Vanguard, HMS Victorious, HMS Vigilant, HMS Vengeance	4 Vanguard Submarines

The running costs of HMNB Clyde are:

	Running costs (£ million)
1997–98	[1]—
1998–99	[1]—
1999–2000	32
2000–01	32
2001–02	28
2002–03	27
2003–04	23
2004–05	28

[1] Data not available

These figures represent the general site operating costs for HMNB Clyde and include utilities, rates and telecommunications and maintenance costs.

The Naval Service uses two other bases in Scotland:

RM Condor

HMS Gannet

Costs for RM Condor and HMS Gannet are, however, captured by function, rather than location, and therefore could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Sea Task Force

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contingency plans his Department has for a sea task force; what non-departmental vessels under *(a)* UK Government, *(b)* Scottish Executive and *(c)* Welsh Assembly control are expected to be called into active service under these plans; and if he will make a statement. [59694]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy maintains a Maritime First Echelon of the Joint Rapid Reaction Force as a contingency force to respond to emerging crises. This comprises forces capable of self-sustaining power-projection operations, based on a Maritime Strike Capability and a Littoral Manoeuvre Capability. This is supported by appropriate enabling forces and auxiliary forces.

The operational requirement for other non-Ministry of Defence shipping that is under UK Government, Scottish Executive, and Welsh Assembly control is event-driven, and would be tailored accordingly. The MOD charters such additional vessels from the shipping market as and when required.

Surveillance Tools (Northern Ireland)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the surveillance tools used by the British Army in their remaining watchtowers and lookout posts in Northern Ireland. [58914]

Mr. Ingram: The Armed Forces' Northern Ireland Normalisation programme is pressing ahead, as recently verified by the Independent Monitoring Commission Demolition of the five remaining towers and observation posts is scheduled to take place by 1 August 2007. However, in the context of continuing operations at those sites, I am withholding information on the surveillance equipment used because its disclosure would be to the detriment of national security, the prevention and detection of crime, defence capability and the safety of individuals.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Employment

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of people employed in the farming industry in *(a)* West Lancashire constituency and *(b)* Lancashire. [58488]

Jim Knight: The total number of people working on agricultural and horticultural holdings in June 2004 were as follows:

	Total employees	*Total labour force*
(a) West Lancashire constituency	600	1,291
(b) Lancashire	4,533	12,427

Notes:
1. Total employees includes full and part time regular workers, salaried managers and casual workers.
2. Total labour force included all employees plus farmers, partners, directors and their spouses if working on the holding.
3. The county of Lancashire comprises of Lancashire CC, Blackburn with Darwen unitary authority and Blackpool unitary authority.
Source:
June Agricultural Survey

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the evidential basis was for her statements that birds vaccinated against avian influenza continue to spread the virus. [56673]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The use of vaccination against outbreaks of avian influenza in recent years has been well documented in many scientific articles and papers. The reporting of this field use of vaccines has been complemented by more controlled laboratory studies. My officials have examined the published material and consulted with experts at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

It has been a frequently recognised feature of the use of vaccine in the field that vaccinated birds can continue to allow spread of the virus, whilst not showing typical clinical signs. This is particularly true if large numbers of birds have been vaccinated.

It is therefore widely recognised that the most important factors in any AI control programme are continued biosecurity, early detection, separation of poultry from wild birds, the slaughter of diseased birds and dangerous contacts, and movement controls around outbreaks. However, we keep the policy on vaccination under review in the light of scientific developments in vaccines.

Departmental Offices (Guildford)

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to move out of its departmental offices in Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford; what representations she has received from departmental employees on this issue; and if she will make a statement. [58047]

Jim Knight: In the light of the Sir Michael Lyons' recommendations about Government occupations in London and the South East, every Department is required to review its estate. Consideration of the long term occupation of the Epsom Road, Guildford site is therefore part of this wide reaching review.

We have engaged consultants to prepare a full business case of the property options. This will be followed by consultations with the key stakeholders. The findings will be passed to the Management Board for their consideration and decision.

We will have a programme of clear communication with those affected and to date I am not aware of any representations from departmental employees on this matter.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many jobs in her Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57671]

Jim Knight: Since 2001 Defra has not relocated any posts to Wales. However, Defra has provided financial assistance to relocate 2 members of staff to posts already existing in Wales.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) her Department and (ii) agencies which report to her. [56537]

Jim Knight: The information is as follows:

Defra helplines

	Telephone contact number
Defra	08459 3305577
Defra International number	+ 4420 7 238 6951
Defra Textphone	0845 3001998
Moorland (SDA)	0845 6056516
Environmental Impact Assessment	0800 0282140
Agricultural Wages	0845 0000134
Whole Farm Approach	0845 0006358
Countryside Agency Access (Right to Roam)	0845 1003298
WRAP Waste and Resources Action Programme	0808 1002040
NFSS National Fallen Stock Helpline	0845 0548888
European Wildlife Division:	0845 6014523
Pets Travel Scheme Helpline	0870 2411710
BCMS (British Cattle Movement Service)	0845 0501234

Agency helplines

	Telephone contact number
Environment Agency (general inquiries)	0870 8506506
Hazardous Waste registration line	0870 8502858
Agricultural Waste registration line	0845 6033113
Floodline	0845 9881188
Incident Hotline	0800 0807060
Hard of Hearing Minicom	0870 2422549
RPA Customer Service Centre	0845 6037777

Departmental Transport

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answers of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1285–6W, on departmental transport; what further steps the Department is taking to stop IBM contractors parking in residential roads in light of IBM contractors ignoring the site-wide notice. [56496]

Jim Knight: Despite the local Council's reluctance to allow Defra/IBM to park in their 'Park and Ride' car parks, so that a shuttle bus could ferry staff to site, it is still Defra/IBM's intention to operate a shuttle bus from the Guildford station. The contract is currently being evaluated by Defra and, subject to a satisfactory outcome, will be signed shortly.

Patrols of the local streets continue and staff, whether they are Defra or IBM, are asked to move their vehicles if they are identified.

Defra has joined the SurreyCarShare Scheme and is now waiting for Surrey county council to launch and promote the scheme on site.

English Nature

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure English Nature spends its budget efficiently. [59862]

Jim Knight: The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Financial Memorandum issued by Defra in 2003 specify the terms under which English Nature receives and spends funds provided by Parliament.

As part of the process for agreeing English Nature's annual Business Plan, English Nature carries out written consultations and holds meetings with officials at Defra to establish English Nature's contribution to delivery of PSA targets, other high-level priorities and targets, corporate level risks and the financial plans. Similar interaction between English Nature and Defra has informed agreement of the English Nature Corporate Plan for 2005–08.

As part of the organisational change anticipated with the creation of Natural England, English Nature is working in partnership with the Rural Development Service and the Landscape, Access and Recreation Team of the Countryside Agency. The three Corporate Plans for 2005–08 have been harmonised to show what each organisation will contribute in this partnership. This provides clear accountability in terms of what English Nature will deliver with the resources it has, while also presenting this in the wider context of organisational change.

Environmental Legislation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely effect of European Court of Justice ruling 2006/C 36/35, OJ 11 February 2006, on planned UK environmental legislation; for what reason the case was contested by the Government; and if she will make a statement. [59808]

Jim Knight: We have considered the implications of the ruling with the devolved Administrations, other Government Departments and Gibraltar. DEFRA will, to meet the court judgment, amend the legislation for England and Wales for the Habitats Regulations 1994 and put in place the Offshore Marine Regulations. Equivalent amendments will be made in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar.

The UK considered that most of the deficiencies highlighted by the Commission were already being adequately implemented in the UK through current legislation, general duties and administrative procedures.

Fisheries

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many UK fishing vessels of 12 metres of more in length, operating in ICES areas VII e, f, g, h and j and using bottom set gillnet or entangling net will be required from 1 January 2006 to use acoustic deterrent devices under Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 (art.2); [38830]

(2) what the total *(a)* length and *(b)* effort in kilometres per hours is of bottom set gillnet and entangling net used by UK fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length operating in ICES areas VII e, f, g, h and j. [38832]

Mr. Bradshaw *[pursuant to the reply, 10 January 2006, Official Report, c. 446W]:* My Answer contained the statement, "the 14 entanglement netters some 11,200,000;". This was incorrect and should have read "the 14 entanglement netters some 1,120,000;". This affects the overall length of nets used in the fishery but the rest of the Answer remains correct and is detailed in full as follows:

> "There are approximately 20 UK vessels of 12 metres or more in length regularly prosecuting this fishery. Gill nets are used for catching hake all year round and entanglement nets are used for catching monkfish, turbot and rays from March to September, a number of vessels prosecute more than one fishery, including wreck netting.
>
> We estimate that the 12 regular hake netters deploy some 240,000 of nets; the 14 regular entanglement netters some 1,120,000; and, the 6 wreck netters some 24,000. This gives a total for the fishery of 1,384,000 of nets.
>
> The data are not available to calculate the effort in kilometres per hour."

Free-range Poultry

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the animal welfare implications of free-range poultry being moved into shelters in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [60409]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA has issued guidance to poultry-keepers about how to avoid welfare problems associated with housing for a sustained period birds that are not used to being kept indoors. This information is available on the DEFRA website at:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/pdf/separating.pdf

Incineration Capacity

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to increase incineration capacity in England. [51203]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The Government have no plans to increase incineration capacity to any particular level; local authorities are responsible for deciding the most appropriate waste management facilities for their areas. Incineration with energy recovery is a sustainable option for the treatment of residual, post-recycling waste and preferable to landfill. In our recently published review of our waste strategy we anticipate needing significantly lower waste to energy capacity than was envisaged at the time of the last waste policy review in 2000.

Organic Entry Level Scheme

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers in Lancashire have been registered under the Organic Entry Level Scheme. [59029]

Jim Knight: Further to my Answer to UIN [53313] given to my hon. Friend the Member for West Lancashire (Rosie Cooper) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 273W, records, as at 22 March 2006, show that 14 applications have been received by the Rural Development Service (RDS) in Lancashire and that six of these have generated a live agreement.

Pandemic Influenza

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she plans to take to ensure continuity of satisfactory food supplies in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza; and if she will make a statement. [58264]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Defra's Food Chain Emergency Liaison Group (FCELG) meets regularly to discuss emergency planning for dealing with disruptions to food supplies as well as food chain resilience issues. The Group comprises representatives from all key sectors in the food chain, for example, the British Retail Consortium for the food retail sector and the Food and Drink Federation for the food manufacturing sector. In consultation with the Group, Defra has promoted Business Continuity Planning best practice within the food industry and has commissioned ongoing research to establish, amongst other things, the extent to which best practice is currently being observed.

The Department of Health, which leads on emergency planning for pandemic influenza, published an Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan in March 2005. As sponsor of the food and drink industry, Defra requested information from each key trade body to help identify the implications of the publication for the food industry. This in turn was followed up at meetings of the FCELG aided by presentations by Department of Health experts on pandemic influenza. In the light of this work the FCELG agreed a number of priorities for further action, in particular regarding the resilience of food transportation, which are being taken forward. In the event of an influenza pandemic, Defra would continue to work closely with the food and drink industry to ensure the continuity of food supply.

Pheasant Rearing

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how intensive pheasant rearing is treated in relation to cross-compliance under single farm payments. [56951]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* All Single Payment Scheme claimants are required to comply with cross-compliance in relation to the agricultural land and activities of their holding. If pheasants are being reared for meat production (i.e. reared and slaughtered in a controlled environment) this is an agricultural activity.

Where pheasants are reared for sport (released into the wild where they may be shot), claimants must still comply with the cross compliance requirements in relation to the agricultural land on which the activity is taking place.

Single Farm Payment

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the administration of the single farm payments scheme in Staffordshire. [57851]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency responds to all correspondence relating to the Single Payment Scheme. As the scheme is not administered on a regional basis, it does not hold records on representations specific to Staffordshire.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many new applicants have registered land for entitlements under the single farm payment. [57982]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* For the 2005 Single Payment Scheme (SPS) year, the Rural Payments Agency received in the order of 48,000 applications from new applicants and businesses.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much previously unregistered land has been registered for the single farm payment. [57983]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* It is not possible to provide a figure for how much previously unregistered land has been registered for the Single Payment Scheme, as the Rural Payments Agency does not ask the applicant to identify the scheme to be claimed at the time of registration. Just over 360,000 new parcels have been registered since the introduction of the Single Payment Scheme and the Entry Level Schemes.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many payments of the single farm payment had been made by the end of February. [57984]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* A total of 2,400 payments were processed and released in February, or BACS payments arranged, the last of which were in bank accounts by 2 March.

Soil Guideline Values

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has held with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding soil guideline values (SGV) and the work of the SGV Taskforce. [59569]

Mr. Morley: Officials of both departments are involved in the Soil Guidelines Value Task Force. We are now considering issues for and possible approaches to improved guidance in respect of assessing the risks to human health which can arise from contaminants in soil, drawing on the work of the Task Force, the Environment Agency, Health Protection Agency and other expertise. A number of discussions have taken place with ODPM officials, and will continue as this work progresses.

Varietal Genetic Use Technologies

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's criteria are for assessing the potential socio-economic impact of varietal genetic use restriction technologies. [58602]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The UK has a position established at the CBD meeting in 2000 on varietal genetic use restriction technology which involves application of the precautionary principle and a scientific assessment of individual applications. Our position remains unchanged.

We would assess any application for approval in the EU of a genetically modified organism (GMO) incorporating varietal genetic use restriction technologies according to the criteria set out under European legislation. These criteria include an assessment of the potential environmental impact but not specifically socio-economic impacts although such assessment is included in the Cartagena protocol which the UK has ratified. This also gives individual developing countries the right to decide whether to apply this technology.

Under article 31 of Directive 2001/18/EC the Commission is bound to provide every three years a report which includes, among other things, an assessment of the socioeconomic implications of deliberate releases and placing on the market of GMOs.

Currently no approval exists for any GMO incorporating such technologies in the EU, nor does any application for the approval of such a GMO exist.

Waste Strategy

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what performance by her Department has been against each of the targets in the Waste Strategy 2000. [59602]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Good progress has been made since this Government's strategy on waste, was published in May 2000. Latest figures for 2004–05 show that recycling and composting rates for household waste have doubled to 22.9 per cent., putting local authorities on course to meet the 2005 national recycling and composting target of 25 per cent. In 2003–04, 28 per cent. of municipal waste had some sort of value recovered from it. Despite expected further increases in recycling the 2005 target of recovering value from 40 per cent. of municipal waste seems unlikely to be met.

The amount of most kind of wastes going to landfill has decreased—down from 82 per cent. to 72 per cent. for municipal waste (1998–89 and 2003–04) and from 50 per cent. to 44 per cent. for industrial and commercial waste (1998–89 and 2002–03), putting us on course to meet our 2005 target of reducing the amount of commercial and industrial waste landfilled to 85 per cent. of that landfilled in 1998. More detailed information on performance against targets can be found in the annex to the consultation document on the review of England's Waste Strategy available on: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wastestratreview/index.htm

HEALTH

Ambulance Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to reduce physical assaults on ambulance personnel. [59971]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In November 2003 a comprehensive range of measures were introduced by the NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS), to proactively and reactively tackle the problem of violence against national health service staff, including those that work in the ambulance services.

These initiatives include the introduction of local security management specialists (LSMS) to provide all NHS health bodies, including ambulance service trusts, with professional skills and expertise locally to tackle security-related problems, including violence against NHS staff. A specific training syllabus for the prevention and management of violence is being developed for ambulance personnel and is to be launched in 2006. The NHS SMS, working in partnership with the Home Office, is evaluating how the use of technology and other interventions can be used to better protect ambulance staff. The project is due to report later in 2006.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects all cancer networks to have fully implemented HER2 testing for women with breast cancer. [59932]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director, is working with cancer networks to ensure HER2 testing arrangements are put in place as soon as possible. He will be reporting to my right hon. Friend shortly on progress and a summary of the position will be made available in due course.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the capacity of cancer networks to offer HER2 testing to women diagnosed with breast cancer and who could benefit from the drug Herceptin; and whether she plans to ensure all cancer networks have access to at least one such testing facility. [60395]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director, is working with cancer networks to ensure that testing arrangements are put in place to enable all women who require it to be tested for HER2 status. This work is ongoing and a summary of the position will be made available in due course.

Child Obesity

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what meetings she has had with the Secretary of State for *(a)* Education and Skills and *(b)* Culture, Media and Sport since 1 January to discuss child obesity; [59954]

(2) what mechanisms are in place to co-ordinate action on child obesity between her Department and the Departments of Culture, Media and Sport and Education and Skills. [59955]

Caroline Flint: Since 1 January 2006, no meetings have taken place between the Secretaries of State for Health, Education and Skills and Culture, Media and Sport. However, regular meetings have been held between senior Departmental officials to discuss issues related to child obesity.

Regarding mechanisms to co-ordinate action, an obesity programme board was set up in July 2005, to oversee and performance manage the delivery of the obesity public service agreement target as well as to facilitate and encourage co-ordinated cross-government action. The board meets regularly, consists of senior representatives from the three target-holding Departments as well as other Government departments with an interest and reports to the health improvement board and to the primary board in the Department for Education and Skills. The cross-government "Every Child Matters: Change for Children Group" is also kept informed. In recognition of the need for cross-government action, other joint working between Departments includes work on the healthy schools programme, on restricting promotion of unhealthy food to children, and on promoting physical activity.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has *(a)* to build and *(b)* to close community hospitals in the South West London and St George's NHS Trust region. [58925]

Jane Kennedy: As confirmed in the recent White Paper 'Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services', the Government fully intends to fulfil its manifesto commitment to develop a new generation of modern National Health Service community hospitals over the next five years. To make this possible an initial capital investment of £100 million to build, rebuild, or refurbish at least fifty community hospitals has been identified.

However, configuration of local service provision facilities remains a matter for primary care trusts. Therefore, the Department does not centrally hold information on local plans, such as for South West London or St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust region, to build or close community hospitals. Paragraph 6.44 of the white paper explains that the Department will be inviting:

> "interested primary care trusts, where appropriate working with local authority partners, to bid for capital support for reinvestment in the new generation of community hospitals and smaller facilities offering local, integrated health and social care services. This will provide the opportunity to create many new community hospitals, as we have done with local improvement finance trust projects, and to expand services on existing community hospital sites if more appropriate. The details of the timing and the tender process will be published in a separate document in mid-2006."

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to monitor proposals to close inpatient beds in community hospitals in *(a)* Kingston and Surbiton, *(b)* South West London and *(c)* London. [58926]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not monitor proposals to close in-patient beds. The planning of health service capacity, including in-patient beds, is for strategic health authorities to lead locally, within the framework of the Department's guidance on capacity planning. The planning of in-patient beds needs to take account of services available from other parts of local health and social care systems, including primary, community, rehabilitative and long-term care.

Community Matrons

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community matrons are employed in each primary care trust in the North West London strategic health authority area; and to how many patients they are providing treatment. [59648]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not collected centrally.

Dentistry

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS patients were registered with NHS general dental practitioners in the York and Selby primary care trust area in each year since 1997. [53681]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS): Number of national health service patients registered with an NHS dentist in Selby and York primary care trust as at 30 September in each specified year

	Number of registered patients
1997	153,505
1998	142,221
1999	141,156
2000	151,381
2001	151,157
2002	151,677
2003	171,667
2004	129,247
2005	146,405

Notes:

1. PDS schemes have varying registration periods. To ensure comparability with corresponding GDS data, PDS registrations are estimated using proxy registrations, namely the number of patients seen by PDS practices in the past 15 months. There will be a break in the registrations series at the point at which PDS schemes were introduced as the proxy registrations build up. Falls in registration rates will be particularly pronounced in the financial year 2004–05, when the majority of PDS schemes were introduced.
2. Data for 2003 and earlier do not include those PDS schemes that do not have any registrations, for example, dental access centres, and are therefore not directly comparable with 2004 and 2005 data.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Departmental Funding

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1297, to the hon. Member for Angus (Mr. Weir) on Departmental funding, if she will break down funding provided to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in each of the last three years by main budget heading. [56957]

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1296W, on departmental funding, if she will break down the figures given for funding provided to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain into *(a)* grant in aid and *(b)* payments for (i) rights and (ii) services in each of the last three years. [60075]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The main items of Department payment to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) in each of the last three years, to March 2006, is as follows:

Main payments to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

£000

	2003–04[1]	2004–05	2005–06
Pharmaceutical Press (now BNF Publications)	3,138	3,041	5,433
Medicines Partnership	510	186	116

[1] In the period April—December 2003, an additional £213,000 plus VAT was paid by the Department and the National Assembly for Wales to the RPSGB for the English and Welsh Drug Testing Scheme.

Diabetes

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that all diabetes patients have access to a range of blood-glucose monitoring equipment. [59068]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A range of blood-glucose testing strips is available on prescription from general practitioners and nurse prescribers. The full list is set out in Part IX of the Drug Tariff.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on *(a)* educational literature and *(b)* telephone support services for diabetes patients in 2004–05. [59070]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not provide educational literature or telephone support services for people with diabetes centrally. From January 2006, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on patient education will require all primary care trusts to implement NICE recommendations by providing all people with diabetes with high quality, structured education.

Drug Treatment Programmes

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the total cost of the purchase of substitute drugs used in 2004–05 in drug treatment; and if she will make a statement. [60068]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The total cost of methadone and buprenorphine prescriptions identified for substance dependence, was £25,411.038[1] in 2004, the latest year for which figures are available.

[1] ePACT Data

Notes:

This information was obtained from the Prescribing Analysis and Cost Tool (PACT) system, which covers prescriptions prescribed by general practitioner (GP) practices in England and dispensed in the community in the United Kingdom. For data at primary care trust (PCT) level, prescriptions written by a GP practice located in a particular PCT but dispensed outside that PCT will be included in the PCT in which the GP practice is based. Prescriptions written in England but dispensed outside England are included. Prescriptions written in hospitals/clinics that are dispensed in the community, prescriptions dispensed in hospitals and private prescriptions are not included in PACT data. It is important to note this as some British National Formulary (BNF) sections have a high proportion of prescriptions written in hospitals that are dispensed in the community.

For example, BNF chapter 4, "Central Nervous System" has a fair proportion of items written in mental health clinics that are dispensed in the community—these prescriptions are not included in PACT data.

Genito-urinary Medicine Clinics

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the number of genito-urinary medicine clinics in London. [52278]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on the 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 449W. It is for strategic health authorities (SHAs) and primary care trusts to determine how services are provided within their area.

Sexual health is one of the top six priorities for the national health service in 2006–07. The White Paper "Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier" published in November 2004 set out that by 2008 everyone should be offered an appointment within 48-hours of contacting a genitourinary clinic. SHAs have submitted plans to meet this target. This increased priority for sexual health and the implementation of "Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services" should significantly strengthen the incentive for local investment and service modernisation.

Copies of the white papers are available in the Library.

General Practitioner Appointments

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have *(a)* requested and *(b)* received an appointment to see a general practitioner within 48 hours in (i) Ruislip-Northwood constituency and (ii) each London borough in each year since 1997. [59649]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not collected centrally.

Since 2001, the Department has collected regular information from primary care trusts on whether patients are being offered the opportunity to be seen by a general practitioner or a primary care professional within the target timeframes specified in the NHS Plan. It does not however collect information on the total number of appointments which are available or their take-up by patients.

Home Oxygen

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of patients who have had difficulty obtaining home oxygen since the new arrangements were introduced; and what steps she is taking to assist them. [59963]

Jane Kennedy: This is a locally managed national health service service and the information requested is not held centrally. In the light of difficulties emerging in the first few days of the new arrangements, we took prompt action to ensure that patients continued to receive the oxygen they need via general practitioner prescriptions dispensed at their local pharmacy, under arrangements supporting a phased transfer to new suppliers. With the NHS, we are monitoring the service closely and we are updating the six-month transfer programme to support a smoother transition to the new arrangements.

Independent Sector Treatment Centre

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of the business case produced for the establishment of an Independent Sector Treatment Centre in Southampton. [57753]

Caroline Flint: The procurement process for an independent sector treatment centre in Southampton is in its early stages. The business case relating to the Southampton scheme contains information that is commercially sensitive and we consider that its release would be likely to jeopardise the ability of the Department and the national health service to secure the best value for money.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make it her policy to ensure that all operations carried out in the proposed Southampton Independent Sector Treatment Centre are additional to those currently carried out by the Southampton University Hospitals Trust; [57755]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of operations that will be transferred from the Southampton University Hospitals Trust to the Southampton Independent Sector Treatment Centre in the first year of operation. [57756]

Caroline Flint: We are working with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and New Forest and Southampton City Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to determine the exact number and type of operations that will be carried out in the proposed independent sector treatment centre (ISTC). The decision as to whether or not there will be transferred activity in an ISTC is generally made by the local national health service. In this instance, it is possible that the amount of transferred activity may amount for up to 37 per cent. of the activity but the final decision regarding the case-mix and proportion of operations that will be transferred will be made in consultation with the SHA and the PCTs, and following further discussion with a preferred bidder.

Leukaemia Specialists

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many leukaemia specialists are employed by the NHS in *(a)* Shropshire and *(b)* Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. [50098]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested.

The table shows medical consultants in the main cancer specialties within Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority (SHA) by organisation.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services: Medical consultants in the main cancer specialties within Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA by organisation (England) at 30 September 2004

Numbers (headcount)

		Of which:			
	All cancer specialties	*Clinical oncology*	*Clinical radiology*	*Haematology*	*Histopathology*
Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	99	9	52	10	28
Burton Hospitals National Health Service Trust	10	—	5	1	4
Mid Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust	12	—	6	2	4
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust	6	—	4	—	2
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	32	4	16	3	9
University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust	39	5	21	4	9

Source: NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the resources available to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to inspect wholesaler dealers' licences. [59099]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the government body responsible for the safety and licensing of medicines in the United Kingdom, employs six full time good distribution practice inspectors. These inspectors inspect the facilities of licensed wholesale dealers of medicines for human use to confirm compliance with the European Commission's guideline on good distribution practice and UK medicines regulations.

This level of resource is sufficient to maintain a regular and repeated inspection programme, of the distribution sites of licensed wholesale dealers.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 989W, on the private finance initiative (PFI), if she will list the PFI schemes which *(a)* had not made unitary payments as at the end of 2003–04 and *(b)* began unitary repayments in financial year (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06; what unitary payments have been made by each trust in each year; and what future payments are expected to be made by each trust. [57420]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1855W, which stated that a detailed list of unitary payment for schemes which have reached financial close had been placed in the Library.

The unitary charge columns shows which schemes had commenced payments in each of the given financial years.

Pharmaceutical Industry

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it is the policy of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency that any form of misconduct or non-compliance within a pharmaceutical company which significantly impacts on patient safety is an example of an expeditable safety concern, with reference to 'notification of safety concerns' as described in the draft of Volume 9A, updated to take account of Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 and Directive 2004/27/EC. [59208]

Jane Kennedy: Pharmaceutical companies as marketing authorisation holders have a legal duty to report to Competent Authorities, in the United Kingdom, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, any information impacting on the benefits and risks of a medicinal product for which they hold an authorisation. If misconduct or non-compliance with the legislation impacted on the risks and benefits of a medicinal product and was not reported, then a criminal offence may have been committed.

The revised draft Volume 9A of the "Rules Governing Medicinal Products for Human Use—Guidelines on Pharmacovigilance for Medicinal Products for Human Use" does not specify that misconduct or non-compliance within a pharmaceutical company is an expeditable safety concern.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether pharmaceutical wholesalers are subject to the same *(a)* licence application tests, *(b)* standards of distribution and *(c)* inspection regimes irrespective of size. [59145]

Jane Kennedy: All applications for a wholesale dealer's licence for the distribution of medicinal products for human use, received by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), are subject to the same administrative processes. The applicant's site(s) is also subject to inspection to confirm compliance with the European Commission's guideline on good distribution practice and United Kingdom medicines regulations.

The facilities of licensed wholesale dealers of medicines for human use are regularly inspected to confirm compliance with the European Commission's guideline on good distribution practice and UK medicines regulations.

The MHRA's licensing and inspection regime for the distribution of medicinal products for human use applies, regardless of the size or nature of the wholesale distribution operation.

Physical Activity

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has spent on *(a)* promoting regular physical activity and *(b)* physical activity interventions for children since 1997. [59953]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the national health service promote the benefits of physical activity in many ways to professionals, the public and other stakeholders. In particular, primary care trusts are required to have systematic and managed health promotion programmes, including action on exercise, that are responsive to local needs. Spending on the promotion of sport and physical recreation by the NHS is not recorded centrally.

Alongside spending by the NHS to support local delivery of physical activity programmes for adults and children, the Department has funded pilot work to inform interventions, as well as supporting projects through the Section 64 Scheme of Grants. This has included:

The local exercise action pilot scheme (LEAP), which is jointly funded by the Department, Sport England and the Countryside Agency with an overall cost of £2.5 million over three years;

A pilot in 2002–03 to test the effectiveness of offering pedometers as motivational tools to patients in general practitioner surgeries under a loan system to encourage greater walking, jointly funded by the Department and the Countryside Agency; and

A joint Department, Department for Education and Science, and Youth Sport Trust pilot programme "Schools on the Move", which includes resource materials for schools, teachers and young people to help integrate pedometers into the life of the school.

Selective Seratonin Re-uptake Inhibitors

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what data are collected by her Department on the number of individuals prescribed selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors by general practitioners; and if she will make a statement. [59528]

Jane Kennedy: Information is not available in the form requested. The Department does not hold data on the number of people who are prescribed medication. However, the latest available annual data shows there were 14.6 million prescriptions for selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors dispensed which were written by general practitioners in England. The net ingredient cost of these was £168.6 million.

Strokes

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was for a consultation for patients who have reported minor strokes in the latest period for which figures are available. [59716]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the Royal College of Physicians' National Sentinel Stroke Audit 2004, the median of average waiting times for neurovascular clinics (clinic for suspected mini-strokes) for England was 14 days.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was for *(a)* carotid ultrasound and *(b)* magnetic resonance imaging for stroke patients in the latest period for which figures are available. [59731]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally.

The Department has not collected data on waiting times in the past but has developed and rolled out a new diagnostics waiting times and activity data collection with effect from January 2006. This will collect data on a range of diagnostic tests. In addition, a bi-annual census will widen the collection. The Department will need to do some preliminary quality assurance work prior to release; however, the first monthly publication is expected in spring 2006.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many stroke patients had repeat strokes within three months of the first occurrence in each of the last five years. [59732]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it is the policy of the NHS to offer *(a)* an electrocardiograph, *(b)* blood tests, *(c)* carotid ultrasound and *(d)* magnetic resonance imaging on the first hospital visit following a stroke. [59733]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The "National clinical guidelines for stroke" produced by the Royal College of Physicians provide a framework for stroke care within the national health service.

These guidelines recommend that if a patient presents with a clinical syndrome that might be due to stroke, then brain imaging should be undertaken as soon as possible, within 24 hours at most of onset, unless there are good clinical reasons for not doing so. If the diagnosis is in doubt after a computed tomography scan, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) should be considered.

A carotid duplex ultrasound should be performed on all patients being considered for carotid endarterectomy and confirmed with MRI, or with a second ultrasound.

Vaccines

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there are circumstances in which she would ask both the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to appraise the use of a particular vaccine by the NHS. [60646]

Caroline Flint: Both the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) may be involved in the consideration of a particular vaccine where the vaccine has had significant impact on national health service services. An example would be human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccines which are in development and showing promise in protecting against cervical cancer. JCVI is considering these vaccines within its remit of providing advice on immunisation issues to health Ministers; NICE is considering their advice on the provision of cervical screening services should HPV vaccines be introduced.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what obligations the NHS is under to use vaccines recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation; and under what circumstances guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommending the use of a particular vaccine would not be binding on the NHS. [60647]

Caroline Flint: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is an advisory committee, and it is for health Ministers to consider the acceptance and implementation of such advice. Hence advice for JCVI per se is not binding on the national health service.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what form guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation takes in respect of advice on the use or otherwise of a particular vaccine by the NHS. [60648]

Caroline Flint: The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) provides advice to Ministers on all issues related to vaccination and immunisation. In carrying out this function, JCVI considers scientific and medical evidence on specific vaccines and makes recommendations accordingly. This is because the safety profile and efficacy of similar vaccines can vary.

The Department purchases vaccines, following the advice from JCVI, and supplies them to the national health service.

Vulnerable Adults

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* registered sex offenders and *(b)* people previously convicted of sexual offences are working with vulnerable adults in health and care services. [48215]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 23 January 2006 to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley), *Official Report*, column 1864W.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Electoral Register

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted in the last five years for failing to complete required returns in relation to the electoral register. [60241]

Bridget Prentice: It is an offence punishable upon conviction by a fine not exceeding £1,000 for an occupier of premises to whom an annual electoral registration form is sent to fail to complete and return it to an electoral registration officer (ERO) in respect of any resident who is eligible to be registered to vote. Local EROs are responsible for compiling a register of eligible electors for their registration area and would hold locally any records regarding prosecutions or convictions for failure to complete and return the registration form or supply information requested by the ERO in relation to electoral registration. However, information on the number of prosecutions or convictions for this offence is not collected centrally.

Notaries

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received from notaries public on barriers to their working in other EU member states. [60281]

Bridget Prentice: In 2006, my Department received one letter from a Member of Parliament concerning notaries public. No correspondence from notaries public or from members of the public was received in 2005.

The Notaries Society touched upon this issue in their response to the white paper, "The Future of Legal Services".

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the barriers facing British notaries public in working elsewhere in the EU; and if she will make a statement. [60358]

Bridget Prentice: Non-Spanish notaries have been experiencing difficulties undertaking conveyancing services in Spain.

I am also aware that there is some concern that the draft Services Directive as currently set out in the European Parliament would exclude notaries from its scope. The UK is continuing discussions on this.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the total annual value of the EU market in the services of notaries public. [60359]

Bridget Prentice: No assessment has been made or is planned.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the appropriateness of the qualifications necessary to practise as a notary public *(a)* in England and Wales and *(b)* elsewhere in the EU; and if she will make a statement. [60360]

Bridget Prentice: Qualification as a notary is regulated by the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury under the direction of the Master of the Faculties.

As the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs has no role in the regulation of notaries, no assessment of the qualifications needed necessary to practise as a notary public, either in the UK or EU, have been made.

Property Sales

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many properties have been sold in Coventry South since 1997. [59941]

Ms Harman: No court buildings have been sold in the Coventry South constituency area since 1997.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Domestic Violence

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with Ministerial colleagues on improving the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence. [51689]

Meg Munn: As Minister for Women, I sit on the Inter-Ministerial Group for Domestic Violence chaired by my noble Friend Baroness Scotland of Asthal which manages the performance of the cross-Government National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan by reviewing progress at quarterly meetings. This is the mechanism for improving the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence nationally.

A substantially revised domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator will help assess overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence.

Equality Audits

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the merits of equality audits. [52248]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Government encourage businesses to carry out equal pay audits because it will identify if a pay system has any bias based on gender, which will in turn enable the organisation to avoid costly litigation, preserve its reputation and attract and retain the best people. Women are more likely to see businesses as an 'employer of choice' if they can be seen to be committed to equal opportunities.

Equal Opportunities Commission's report "Equal pay reviews survey 2005" shows that in 2005, the reason stated by 77 per cent. of large organisations for carrying out an equal pay audit was because they wanted to be seen as a good practice employer.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Active Communities Directorate

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account is taken of gender equality in the work of the Active Communities Directorate. [57243]

Paul Goggins: The Active Communities Directorate (ACD), as part of the Home Office, is dedicated to promoting equality, fairness and respect.

The ACD, through its many consultations with the voluntary and community sector, has endeavoured to seek the views of a wide range of organisations in the development and delivery of all its work.

It also aims to use best practice to assess, consult and monitor the impact of its policies with regards to race equality, disability and gender. The Home Office is running a five year programme promoting the importance of impact assessments and best practice on how to carry these out.

Antisocial Behaviour

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representations he has received on antisocial behaviour orders from organisations which represent *(a)* children's and *(b)* human rights issues; [59737]

(2) what the Government's definition of antisocial behaviour is; how the definition was arrived at; and what assessment has been made of the suitability of the definition. [59747]

Hazel Blears: We have a number of regular discussions with interested parties including those that represent children's and human rights interests. We have, for example, worked with a wide range of stakeholders on revising our guidance for practitioners.

The definition of antisocial behaviour is contained in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This is

> "acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant)".

The definition is broad and allows for a range of activities to be included within it. However, if we were to strictly define antisocial behaviour by certain types of behaviour or break it down into specific categories and sub-categories we would risk excluding some types of behaviour which are problematic or including others which may not be. We believe this would restrict action. Antisocial behaviour manifests itself in different ways across different communities and we believe agencies should have the flexibility to determine what constitutes antisocial behaviour at a local level. The current definition was endorsed by the Home Affairs Select Committee in their report into antisocial behaviour published on 5 April 2005.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was raised by local authorities in fines for antisocial behaviour in each year for which figures are available. [59907]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

The total local authority fixed penalty revenue is:

£

	Litter	*Dog fouling*	*Noise*	*Graffiti*	*Fly-posting*
1997–98	16505	7010	0	n/a	n/a
1998–99	63240	29012.50	0	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	39075	32637.50	0	n/a	n/a
2000–01	28470	41386	0	n/a	n/a
2001–02	138840.20	51037	[1]—	n/a	n/a
2002–03	231547.11	69484	[1]—	n/a	n/a
2003–04	193438	102325	[1]—	n/a	n/a
2004–05	301535	62879	1693	293	1703

[1] No figures available.

Biometric Passports

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2115–56W, on passport information sharing, what representations he has *(a)* made to and *(b)* received from (i) the European Union and (ii) European nation-states on the wholesale sharing of (A) biometric and (B) other details to be contained within biometric passports; and if he will make a statement. [60079]

Andy Burnham: I have made no representations to the European Union or European nation-states on the wholesale sharing of the details contained in UK passports, including the facial biometric, nor have I received any representations.

Carlile Inquiry

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will respond to the recommendations of Lord Carlile of Berriew's inquiry into the treatment of children in penal custody; and if he will make a statement. [59707]

Fiona Mactaggart: My colleague, Baroness Scotland, is meeting Lord Carlile on 29 March to discuss his report. The Home Office and the Youth Justice Board are looking at the recommendations in the report. We will announce in due course any action we propose to take in relation to them.

Correspondence

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the chairman of the Cheshire police authority dated 18 November 2005. [49696]

Hazel Blears: A reply was sent on my behalf by the Police Structures Review programme manager on 13 February 2006. The Home Secretary and I also met with Mr. Nurse and other chairs of police authorities and chief constables from the north west region on 6 February.

Crime Categories/Statistics

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances crime against business is recorded as a distinct category; and if he will make a statement. [59270]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office currently publishes annual total crime statistics recorded by the police in England and Wales for the following offences specifically relating to business crime; theft by an employee, theft from shops, theft of an automatic machine or meter and robbery of business property. The most recent figures are available in Statistical Bulletin 11/05 "Crime in England and Wales 2004–05" at http://morello.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0405.html

We recognise that these figures do not cover all the crimes experienced by the business sector (either directly or indirectly), and that businesses themselves do not report every incident for a variety of reasons. Given this, in July 2005 the Home Office also published the findings of the 2002 Commercial Victimisation Survey. This provided further information on the actual levels of business crime as well as an indication of the proportion of businesses which report the crimes committed against them.

The Home Office Business Crime Team is currently looking at how information on business crime can be enhanced—specifically whether it is feasible to identify crimes against businesses in police recorded crime statistics. Findings from crime recording pilots in South Wales and Greater Manchester are currently being considered.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the trends in *(a)* crimes of violence against the person and *(b)* drug offences since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [58219]

Hazel Blears: An analysis of Crime in England and Wales, using recorded crime statistics and the results of the British Crime Survey, was published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 11/05, 'Crime in England and Wales 2004–2005'. Chapter four contains a section on drug and other offences and chapter five analyses violent crime. The bulletin can be found on the internet site at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm.

Custody Statistics (Children)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were in custody in each year since 1997. [59303]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information regarding the number of children under the age of 18 who are held in custody is provided in the following table.

Information for prison establishments is as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

Information for Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes has been supplied by the Youth Justice Board for the years 2000 onwards, and by the Department for Education and Science for earlier years.

Young persons population in custody at 30 June 1997 to 2005

	Local Authority Secure Children's Homes[1]	*Secure Training Centres*[2]	*15 to 17-year-olds in prison*
1997	110	—	2,479
1998	150	—	2,466
1999	145	—	2,422
2000	267	125	2,434
2001	292	116	2,434
2002	314	135	2,607
2003	327	183	2,253
2004	267	181	2,274
2005	237	248	2,310

[1] Figures from 2000 to 2005 from YJB, as at 30 June each year. Figures from 1997 to 1999 from DfES, as at 31 March each year.

[2] Introduced in 2000—figures from YJB

Custody Visitors

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many independent custody visitors in England and Wales have signed the Official Secrets Act 1989 as part of the *(a)* appointment and *(b)* re-appointment process; [57124]

(2) what guidelines he has issued on whether independent custody visitors need to sign the Official Secrets Act 1989; [57125]

(3) how many independent custody visiting panels have been asked by their police authority to sign the Official Secrets Act 1989. [57134]

Hazel Blears: Information is not held centrally. Every police authority is required under section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002 to make arrangements for independent custody visitors in their area and to keep those arrangements under review. Police authorities are responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing independent custody visitors. It is an operational matter for the police authority in consultation with the relevant chief officer of police to consider the level of vetting and security clearance required in their police area.

Danish Embassy Protests

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been charged with criminal offences as a result of their actions outside the Danish embassy in London on 4 February 2006. [57382]

Paul Goggins: The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has informed me that five men have been arrested in connection with offences believed to have been committed during a demonstration in central London on 3 February 2006. Three have been charged and two have been bailed pending further investigations.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff reductions have been made in order to meet his Department's efficiency savings target since July 2004; and how much his Department has saved as a result of such reductions. [59913]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to my answer given on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 82W.

Drug-related Crime (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to tackle drug-related crime in Peterborough constituency. [47919]

Paul Goggins: Drug related crime is generally defined as crime committed by drug misusing offenders to fund their drug misuse. The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) was introduced by this Government as a specific response to the problem. It is part of the largest investment ever in addressing the misery caused by drugs in our communities.

The intensive form of programme operates in 97 areas, including Peterborough, with historically high levels of drug related crime and provides a route out of crime and into drug treatment. It brings to bear on offenders a range of interventions such as drug testing and restriction on bail to ensure that drug misusers confront their offending behaviour and receive drug treatment—for which waiting times have been substantially reduced over the past three years.

The most prolific of these offenders are also targeted by the Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) Programme. In Peterborough both the DIP and PPO schemes are well managed and effective. They have received additional Government funding to work together to ensure their joint operations and working are properly developed. Working closely with the police, the Nene Project in Peterborough is an excellent example of a multi-agency partnership approach that has contributed to a reduction in acquisitive crime and was highly commended in the Office of Public Management Annual Leadership Awards.

We continue to make the fight against drug related crime more effective—for example, following the 2005 Drugs Act, drug testing on arrest for a trigger offence (and a required assessment for drug treatment) was implemented in three areas on one December 2005 and will be rolled out to Peterborough on 31 March 2006.

As well as programmes such as DIP and PPOs, the police continue to tackle drugs at both level one and two, including recent successful targeted operations combating local drug dealers. In addition, Peterborough police work closely with the force economic crime unit to identify and seize assets of people that profit through drug dealing and associated criminality. In 2004–05 Cambridgeshire constabulary obtained confiscation orders of over £2 million.

Nationally, acquisitive crime—to which drug-related crime makes a substantial contribution—is going down and fell by 12 per cent. in the year to April 2005.

Fireworks Offences

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for the misuse of fireworks in the Northumbria police force area. [57688]

Hazel Blears: Offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (made under section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003 for breach of the national fireworks curfew, the illegal possession of category four fireworks and the possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework) attract penalty notices for disorder, as does the offence of throwing fireworks. The offence of throwing fireworks has been included in the penalty notice for disorder scheme since it was introduced nationally during 2004. The offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 were brought into the scheme with effect from 11 October 2004.

The numbers of penalty notices issued for these offences in the Northumbria police force area during 2004, alongside provisional data from January to September 2005, are provided in the following table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for fireworks offences, Northumbria police force area, 2004 and January-September 2005 provisional data

Police force	*Throwing fireworks*	*Breach of fireworks curfew*	*Possession of a category 4 firework*	*Possession by under 18 of adult firework*
Northumbria				
2004	3	—	—	—
January-September 2005 (provisional)	—	—	—	—

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Home Detention Curfew

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many home detention curfew applications which were refused were referred to the Ombudsman in each year since 2001; how many times the Ombudsman asked the board to reconsider its decision in each year; and in how many of those cases the board then granted a home detention curfew order. [59374]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Identity Fraud

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of identity fraud amongst his Department's employees. [59612]

Andy Burnham: I launched the Home Office identity theft leaflet in September 2005. Home Office employees were made aware of the launch through the Department's Intranet, which also included information about the Home Office identity theft website—www.identitytheft.org.uk. The leaflet was also distributed to all UK Passport Service offices. The Home Office also supported National Identity Fraud Prevention Week, which took place in October 2005. During the week, the identity theft leaflet was made available to employees and information about identity fraud was communicated through the internal staff magazine, notice-boards, display stand, Intranet and plasma screens. This included advice about what employees can do to protect against identity fraud, what to do if it happens to them and where to get further help.

IMPACT

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Intelligence Management Prioritisation Analysis Co-ordination Tasking (IMPACT) Initiative 2005; and if he will list the component parts of *(a)* IMPACT and *(b)* IMPACT 2005. [56330]

Hazel Blears: IMPACT 2005 was the title of the project to deliver the short term elements of the programme; in particular the development and deployment of the IMPACT Nominal Index (INI) and the associated work on data preparation in forces. With the delivery of the INI on 23 December, IMPACT 2005 came to an end and the work was subsumed into the wider IMPACT Programme to deliver the information sharing capability which will give full effect to Sir Michael Richard's recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 8 to 11.

The components of IMPACT are subject to the decisions to be made following consideration of the business case.

Indecent Images (Cautions)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of offenders who have received a caution for having indecent pictures of children have been placed on the Sex Offenders Register. [48500]

Paul Goggins: All adults (aged 18 years old or above) who are the subject of a conviction, finding or caution for an offence under section one of the Protection of Children Act 1978 (indecent photographs of children) or under section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (possession of indecent photographs of a child) are made subject to the notification requirements of Part two of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which are more commonly known as the sex offenders register. These requirements apply as an automatic consequence of a conviction, finding or caution for a relevant sexual offence.

Any minor (under 18 years old) convicted for the same offences will only be made subject to the notification requirements if they are sentenced to a term of imprisonment or receive a community sentence of at least 12 months. Minors cautioned for these offences will not be made subject to the notification requirements.

Life Expectancy

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1665W, on life expectancy, whether the two studies referred to provided any evidence of the impact of experiencing burglary on life expectancy among older victims. [60292]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office conducted some research in this area and produced a report in 2003, "Experiences of older burglary victims", (R. Donaldson (2003) Home Office Findings 198). This looked at a small group of 56 people living in sheltered accommodation who had been the victim of burglary.

The report suggests that the health of these people declined faster than non-burgled fellow residents of a similar age. Two years after the burglary they were 2.4 times more likely to have died or be in residential care. This was a small study, so should be treated with caution.

Following on from this, the Home Office produced the report "Older victims of burglary and distraction burglary-recommendations for practitioners" (2003 Home Office Development and Practice Report 11), which drew on the Donaldson report and another report "Distraction burglary amongst older adults & minority ethnic communities" (Thornton et al (2003) Home Office Findings 197).

The Thornton report found that the impact on victims was less than the Donaldson report, but there were differences between the samples studied. The average age in Donaldson's study was significantly older (81 compared to 76).

The Thornton report had only 16 per cent. of its 215 subjects living in a warden assisted environment. The Thornton report, while not specifically concluding on life expectancy, found a smaller proportion of people showing any change in physical health, post-incident.

Life Sentences

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates serving life sentences there were in each year since 1992. [59305]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the numbers of prisoners serving life sentences held in each year since 1992 is to be found in Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002, CM 5996, table 5.1, and table 8.1 in the Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004 for England and Wales

Mini-motorbikes

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers local authorities have to tackle irresponsible use of mini-motorbikes. [59135]

Hazel Blears: Local authorities and the police have a range of interventions available to them to tackle this problem. In particular any mechanically propelled vehicle can be seized by the police if it is being driven both in a careless and inconsiderate manner on-road or off-road without lawful authority, and is likely to be causing antisocial behaviour. In addition, local authorities can seize any noise making equipment including vehicles, when the noise constitutes a statutory nuisance.

National Offender Management Service

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what legal authority regional offender managers negotiate service level agreements with local probation areas under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [59966]

Fiona Mactaggart: Regional Offender Managers will be commissioning services from prison and probation areas through Service Level Agreements from 1 April 2006. The current legislative framework, which sets out the statutory duties of probation boards remains in place, and is unchanged by the creation of Service Level Agreements. However, the SLAs are the key mechanism for introducing commissioning, and signed SLAs will demonstrate the strength of the relationships. Any legal authority derives from the fact that ROMs are Crown servants exercising the powers of the Secretary of State.

Number Plate Recognition

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders have been charged after being stopped following the use of automatic and number plate recognition cameras. [59168]

Hazel Blears: The number of offenders that have been charged after being stopped following the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras is not held centrally.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cameras that automatically recognise number plates are installed on roads on British roads. [59169]

Hazel Blears: There are a variety of fixed site and mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)-enabled cameras in existence. These cameras are operated by a number of different organisations such as the police service, local authorities and other system owners. The information on the total numbers of cameras is not collected centrally.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend automated number plate recognition technology across the country. [60652]

Hazel Blears: Following the publicised success of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Project Laser Two, involving 23 police forces, this concept was then rolled out to all forces in England and Wales on one April 2005.

The Government have made £25 million capital funding available to the Police Service in years 2005–06 and a further £7.5 million in 2006 and 2007 (£32.5 million in total) for the provision of ANPR technological development. This investment both addresses, and builds on, the success that ANPR has achieved in the fight against serious and organised crime, terrorism, volume crime and road traffic offending.

Passports

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve the security of the UK passport to prevent identity theft. [59379]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The UK Passport Service is engaged in a range of initiatives designed to enhance the security of the passport issuing process and the UK passport itself. Because of the nature of fraud and the way in which criminals seeking to obtain passports illegally may operate, UKPS has taken a holistic approach to enhancing security. The initiatives which are under way are therefore designed to ensure that each part of the passport operation contributes to the security of the whole system and ensures the integrity of the UK passport.

The UKPS corporate and business plan for 2005–10 describes these initiatives and sets out the agency's strategic objectives for fraud prevention. This programme of work includes:

better arrangements for the reporting of lost, stolen and recovered passports, and the storage of that data on a new database which is shared with UK Border Control, and Interpol.

the use of secure delivery for the despatch of all passports which has reduced losses of passports in the post by 80 per cent.

increasing the professionalism of its fraud investigation capability through the establishment in all passport offices of fraud and intelligence units. These units have been provided with specialist professional training accredited by the University of Portsmouth and are further supported by the introduction of a fraud casework and management system.

further developing IT systems to build on the automatic checks on applications that already take place, to better link passport records to an individual.

the introduction of more secure passports incorporating biometrics identifiers. The first UK e.Passport was issued on 6 March, and rollout to all customers should be completed by the end of August.

the application, from March of this year, of the social footprint approach to confirming an individuals identity through a Personal Identification Project (PIP).

the introduction from November 2006 of mandatory interviews for first time adult passport applicants.

developing the capability to have automated on line access to UK birth and death records and to naturalisation records.

using facial recognition technology to identify fraudulent duplicate applications.

planning for the introduction of fingerprints in passports by 2009.

Data sharing and the positive validation of passport data is critical to the fight against fraud. The UKPS has developed Omnibase which provides secure web based access to passport information for FCO consular posts abroad, UK's Border control authorities, the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency, Criminal Records Bureau and other Government Departments. From July of this year, and building on successful pilots, UKPS plan to extend this passport validation service (PVS) to financial institutions who receive passports as evidence of identity from customers opening bank accounts, seeking mortgages or undertaking other financial transactions. The pilots have already shown that PVS can support users in the identification of suspicious passports and prevent fraud.

Police

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding his Department has allocated to the special constables' scheme in each year it has been running in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* Lancashire. [58585]

Hazel Blears: Home Office specific grants to police forces under the Special Constabulary Capacity Building Scheme began in January 2004.

Payments are made to the Police Authority and are not broken down by district. Payments made to Lancashire are shown as follows:

	£
2004	52,000
2005	70,000
2006–07	21,952

For 2006–07 the scheme covers 15 months from 1 January 2006 to 31 March 2007 to bring payments into line with financial years. The figure shown for 2006–07 is for grants made for the period 1 January to 31 March 2006. A second instalment of £65,500 has been provisionally allocated for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Steve McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the budgetary implications of amalgamating police forces with different levels of liability for police injury pensions; and what arrangements he plans to put in place to ensure consistent transitional arrangements for the payment of police injury pensions during the process of police force amalgamation. [59702]

Hazel Blears: Police injury pensions are paid out of the operating account of the Police Authority for the force from which the officer retired. When forces are amalgamated the new Police Authority that is created will take on the liability for the payment of all police injury awards. In the transitional period between the setting up the new strategic police authority and the establishment of the new strategic force, each existing authority will continue to pay such pensions until the precursor police authorities are abolished on 1 April in the year of amalgamation.

As a consequence of the Police Negotiating Board Agreement of May 2002 guidance was issued to forces in March 2003 to ensure greater consistency on the management of ill health retirement and injury awards. This was supplemented by detailed guidance on how to assess claims for injury awards, which was made available to forces in January 2004 as part of the briefing for the newly set-up Police Medical Appeal Boards.

The Home Office will work with forces and authorities in planning and implementing amalgamations. Each new force will have dedicated business change support to ensure that mergers are managed effectively.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether police pensions are *(a)* revenue grant funded and *(b)* paid from funded schemes; what proportion of the annual revenue allocation for police operations for 2005–06 went towards the payment of pensions; what the change has been in that proportion over the last 10 years; what the revenue grant for the pension commitment was in (i) cash and (ii) real terms in each year; and if he will make a statement. [59704]

Hazel Blears: Police pensions are currently funded on a pay as you go basis whereby all pensions are paid from the Police Authority's operating account and therefore directly funded by the revenue grant.

In 2005–06 15 per cent. of the annual revenue allocation for police operations was spent on police pensions[1].

The revenue grant is unhypothecated, it is a general grant provided to enable police authorities to meet their costs. As such it is not possible to say what was provided for pensions as it is for Police Authorities to determine how their grant is spent.

From 1 April 2006 a new system will be used to finance the Police Pension Scheme. The cost of pensions in payment will be met from a new pensions account. Authorities will pay officer and employer contributions into this new account and the Government will top up it up with a grant if there is a shortfall or will recoup any surplus.

[1] *Source:*
Police Statistics 2005–06 (Estimates), CIPFA: Statistics Information Service.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional funding will be made available to each of the police forces in the West Midlands to help with the costs of their merger into a new West Midlands force; and if he will make a statement. [57880]

Hazel Blears: We have set aside £50 million next year and £75 million in 2007–08 across England and Wales to address prospective force amalgamations. The Government is currently looking carefully at the funding requirements of the costs of merger within the West Midlands.

David Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision was made for the transport costs of community police officers in rural areas in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [59646]

Hazel Blears: This information is not held centrally. Expenditure on policing supported by Government grant or spent centrally on services for the police increased by 39 per cent. (over £3 billion) between 2000–01 and 2005–06. Leicestershire received its fair share of available funding. Allocation of resources and appropriate budget management are matters for the Chief Constable of Leicestershire Constabulary and the Police Authority.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what routine background checks are made on *(a)* serving police officers, *(b)* police recruits and *(c)* community support officers; and if he will make a statement. [59067]

Hazel Blears: Enhanced vetting checks are carried out on officers working in sensitive posts.

Before appointing anyone as a police officer, criminal record checks are carried out on applicants and their families. Employment and education history are checked and references obtained. Local intelligence checks, financial vetting and security vetting are also carried out.

All Police Community Support Officers are subject to criminal records and local intelligence checks.

Prisoners

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the potential for the rehabilitation of offenders through the companionship of animals, with particular reference to animal-assisted therapy programmes in prisons. [49429]

Fiona Mactaggart: There has been no research commissioned by the Home Office to evaluate the potential of animal-assisted therapy in the rehabilitation of offenders in prison. The Home Office does have a programme of research evaluating the impact of interventions aimed at targeting the criminogenic needs of offenders.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the use of segregation units in prisons; what facilities each prison's segregation unit contains; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure appropriate use of segregation facilities. [59198]

Fiona Mactaggart: The policy on design and use of segregation units is contained within Prison Service Order 1700. As a minimum segregation units provide accommodation to the same standard as that on normal location. Under the Prison and Young Offender Institution (YOI) Rules prisoners may be placed in segregation for Good Order or Discipline (GOOD), own protection, awaiting adjudication, or cellular confinement. Prisoners on "dirty protest" may also be moved to special accommodation in a segregation unit. The PSO sets out the required management checks that take place in segregation units on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Additionally members of the IMB visit twice a week.

Prisons

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken by his Department to improve co-ordination between the mental health establishment and the Prison Service in the provision of services to the prison population. [55526]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since 2005, most national health service primary care trusts have been responsible for commissioning healthcare services in the publicly run prisons in England and Wales. From April 2006, all PCTs will have this responsibility. Prison healthcare was previously the responsibility of the Prison Service. These new arrangements have resulted in an alignment of prison health services, including mental health services, with the mainstream NHS.

In addition, the Department of Health is investing nearly £20 million a year in NHS mental health in-reach services for prisoners. These are community mental health teams working within prisons and therefore help to provide continuing care as prisoners move between prison and the community. By the spring, every prison in England and Wales will have access to these services.

The Government is working to create still greater co-ordination of the agencies involved in providing mental health services in prisons. The Home Office and the Department of Health recently produced joint guidance to help staff delivering mental health services in prisons work more effectively with their NHS colleagues, to facilitate quicker transfers to hospital for people whose mental health difficulties mean they are too ill to remain in prison. This guidance, The transfer of prisoners to and from hospital under sections 47 and 48 of the Mental Health Act (1983), Prison Service Instruction 03/2006 is available on the Prison Service's website at http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsis/

QinetiQ

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many contracts were awarded to QinetiQ by the Home Department *(a)* with and *(b)* without competitive tendering in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; and what the value of the contract was in each case. [42498]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The available information recorded by the Home Office on contracts awarded to QinetiQ is in the attached table.

Information is not held centrally, and existing purchasing systems do not necessarily record whether tenders are competitively tendered. It is not possible to collate this information comprehensively without incurring disproportionate cost.

The delay in replying was in light of advice from the Ministry of Defence's external lawyers in relation to the QinetiQ Initial Public Offering Process. In sum, the advice was that the release of detailed, material commercial information about QinetiQ during the IPO process could possibly result in failure to comply with legal obligations which require the QinetiQ prospectus (published on 25 January) to be the source of information on which investors decide whether or not to buy shares in QinetiQ. The period that this advice applied to ended on 11 March.

Description	*Competitively tendered?*	*Contract value (£)*
2002–03		
Passive Millimetric Wave Machines	competitive tender	1,262,000
2003–04		
Criminal Records Bureau—Independent Review of IT System	competitive tender	55,000
Criminal Justice IT Security Health Check	n/k	11,200
2004–05		
Criminal Records Bureau Technical Assurance of iPLX response	non-competitive tender	12,000
UK Passport Agency CRAMM study	competitive tender	78,000
UK Passport Agency Finance & Procurement Project Manager	competitive tender	79,920
Technical consultancy	n/k	8,973
Analysis of SITA's monopoly for the provision of passenger data	n/k	26,918
Analysis of SITA's monopoly for the provision of passenger data	n/k	8,483
Consultancy support	n/k	8,000
Horizon Redevelopment project	n/k	52,917
Adelphi Purchase Order No 7004028	n/k	2,550
Adelphi Purchase Order No 7004586	n/k	10,637

Security Industry

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to allow the security industry to deploy unlicensed staff in the event that the Approved Contractors Scheme, under the Private Security Industry Act 2001, is delayed past 28 March. [50172]

Paul Goggins: I announced on 16 February that the Approved Contractors Scheme (ACS) Regulations were tabled on the 27 February 2006 to bring the ACS into force from 20 March 2006. As of 21 March, 65 companies had received approved contractor status with a further 133 applications submitted.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that details of the Approved Contractors Scheme set out in the Private Securities Industry Act 2001 will be announced in time for implementation by the Security Industry Authority before March. [50178]

Paul Goggins: On 16 February, I announced the details of the Approved Contractors Scheme (ACS). Regulations were tabled on the 27 February 2006 and the ACS brought into force on 20 March 2006. As of 21 March, the Security Industry Authority have approved 65 companies and have received a further 133 applications.

Sexual Offences Act

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests and *(b)* successful prosecutions there have been under section 47 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and if he will make a statement. [55799]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available centrally. The information on arrests that is collected is based on persons arrested for recorded crime (notifiable offences) by main offence group only (i.e. sexual offences, violence against the person and burglary etc.) and therefore does not identify individual offences.

Data held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform show that there have been no convictions in 2004 for offences relating to paying for sex with a child under section 47 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This Act came into force on 1 May 2004.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding streams his Department plans to finance in 2006–07 to tackle social exclusion. [56215]

Paul Goggins: Social Exclusion is a multi faceted problem and there are many Home Office programmes and funding streams that contribute towards tackling it. Fear of crime, antisocial behaviour and community cohesion, reinforce social exclusion, and we are working closely with other government departments to tackle these issues.

The Respect Action Plan (RAP) is central to the Government's drive to step up and broaden the clampdown on antisocial behaviour and to promote decent behaviour. The plan includes measures to tackle the causes of unacceptable behaviour by targeting the most disadvantaged communities and working on a national network of intensive family support projects. This will reinforce government efforts to improve the life chances of those in greatest need and tackle the cycle of inter-generational disadvantage.

Fear of crime is more prevalent in inner city and high crime areas. To address these and other variations the Home Office is delivering a targeted communications strategy, ensuring that the facts about crime and fear of crime are made known through a wide network of practitioners and community activists. Since 2002 the strategy has reached over 10,000 practitioners—and through them an estimated three million people.

Community capacity and empowerment is key to improving life-chances. Firm Foundations, (Home Office, 2004), sets out the Government's framework for Community Capacity Building. The Active Citizenship for Active Learning (ALAC) programme also helps adults develop the skills and confidence to make a difference as an active citizen. In addition, we have recently funded a series of problem solving projects to learn more about how to involve socially excluded groups. We are also investing £150 million through the ChangeUp programme to improve the support services available to voluntary and community sector organisations, including those working to tackle social exclusion. And we are working with other Departments and local authorities to foster improved cohesion between different communities. We are providing new resources through the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to fund work by faith groups which promote better understanding and dialogue between different faith communities.

Central to this strategy is the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund which brings together Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding aimed at tackling crime, illegal drugs and antisocial behaviour; empowering communities and improving the condition of streets and public spaces. The Fund is paid to all top tier local authorities in England and will total at least £220 million in 2006–07. The Fund also represents the main Home Office contribution to Local Area Agreements, which help to focus and join up actions addressing issues of local importance, such as social exclusion.

Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his Department and (ii) agencies which report to him. [56540]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information is as follows:

(i) The Department utilises the following such numbers:

(a) 0800 389 7913 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Asylum Appeals)

0800 389 8289 Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Minicom (Immigration and Nationality Enquiry Bureau (INEB)

0800 587 5572 Work Permits UK Helpline

(b) 0845 010 5200 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Citizenship Helpline)

0845 010 6677 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Employers Helpline)

0845 039 8002 Prospects Helpline

0845 456 0700 HM Prison Service (Recruitment)

0845 600 0914 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (National Asylum Support Services (NASS) Voucher Enquiries)

0845 601 1143 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Public Fax (Telephone Enquiry Bureau))

0845 601 2298 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Evidence and Enquiry)

0845 602 1739 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (NASS Telephone Enquiry Bureau)

(c) 0870 000 1397 HM Prison Service

0870 000 1585 Home Office Public Enquiry Line (replaced on 15 September 2005 with a geographical number, 020 7035 4848 but retained while phone books and other publicity is updated)

0870 000 8518 Crime Reduction (advice on preventing care crime)

0870 220 2000 Together (advice to practitioners on tackling antisocial behaviour)

0870 240 3781 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (INEB)

0870 241 0645 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (INEB Application Forms)

0870 241 6523 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Complaints)

0870 606 7766 Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Main)

(ii) This type of information is not held centrally in respect of the agencies which report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, however, the following information—which may not be comprehensive—has been obtained:

(a) None

(b) 0845 300 2002 Independent Police Complaints Commission

(c) 0870 240 8090 UK Passport Service (Textphone)

0870 241 1902 UK Passport Service (Complaints)

0870 243 0100 Security Industry Authority

0870 243 4477 UK Passport Service (High Street Partners)

0870 521 0410 UK Passport Service (Main)

0870 909 0344 Criminal Records Bureau (Minicom)

0870 909 0811 Criminal Records Bureau (Main)

0870 909 0822 Criminal Records Bureau (Registration)

0870 909 0844 Criminal Records Bureau (Disclosure applications)

Terrorism

Steve McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a link has been established between professional counterfeit operations and other forms of organised crime, with particular reference to terrorism. [50560]

Paul Goggins: Identity fraud and other misrepresentations using counterfeit documents (or fraudulently obtained ones) are employed both by organised criminals and terrorists. Some terrorist and criminal groups have the capability to produce such documents for themselves while others will look to third parties.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made with the consultation on helping British victims of terrorism and other acts of violence abroad; and when he expects to make an announcement. [59579]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The consultation period for the Green Paper "Rebuilding Lives: supporting victims of crime" ended on 1 March 2006.

The Government are looking at the scope for a national charitable fund to provide some immediate help for those caught up in terrorist attacks wherever they take place. It is also looking at ways of raising public awareness of insurance while travelling abroad. An announcement will be made in due course.

Under-age Drinking

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department has taken to ensure that off-licences and supermarkets do not sell alcohol to under-age drinkers. [53009]

Paul Goggins: We are working closely with the industry, including retailers to tackle sales of alcohol to under-age drinkers. As a result, the industry, supported by many of the major bodies, recently launched its Social Responsibility Standards for the Production and Sale of Alcoholic Drinks in the UK, emphasising the importance of preventing under-age purchases. The Government are working with the national supermarkets, which have pledged to eliminate under-age sales by the end of this year. It also supports specific measures and initiatives including: 'PASS' (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) age verification cards; schemes that reward good licensed premises management, including 'Best Bar None'; and the 'Challenge 21' approach now commonplace in supermarkets.

The Government also support rigorous law enforcement and has introduced a range of powers for dealing with under-age sales ranging from fixed penalty notices to the review of premises licenses.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many summonses were issued in Swindon for selling alcohol to minors as a result of test purchase operations and visits between 12 November 2004 and 24 December 2005; [59014]

(2) how many test purchase operations to target underage sales of alcohol were carried out by police and trading standards officers in Swindon between 12 November 2004 and 24 December 2005. [58764]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2123W.

Wildlife Crime

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the resources available to police officers for tackling wildlife crime; and if he will make a statement. [59544]

Hazel Blears: It is for individual Chief Constables and Police Authorities to make any appropriate assessment regarding the availability of resources to Police officers for tackling wildlife crime.

Unlawful Telephone Tapping

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the incidence of unlawful telephone tapping in *(a)* public sector and *(b)* private sector organisations; and if he will make a statement. [58892]

Hazel Blears: Under section one of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, it is a criminal offence for a person intentionally and without lawful authority to intercept any communication in the course of its transmission. Available details on prosecutions for unlawful interception are set out in the following table.

Number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates court, found guilty and sentenced at all courts for unlawful interception of postal, public or private telecommunications scheme, in England and Wales, 2000 to 2004[1]

	Prosecuted	*Not guilty*	*Found guilty*	*Conditional discharge*	*Fine*	*Community sentence*
2000	—	—	—	—	—	—
2001	—	—	—	—	—	—
2002	3	2	1	—	1	—
2003	4	1	3	1	—	2
2004	4	2	4	—	—	4

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Source:

RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Ref IOS 089-06

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 23 March 2006

CABINET OFFICE

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the costs were of having the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the right hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn), as an additional Cabinet Member between 8 September 2004 and 6 May 2005. [60587]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the Cabinet Office annual report and resource accounts 2004–05, a copy of which is available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/annualreport/resourceaccounts0405.pdf

Gas Storage (Duchy of Lancaster Land)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions he has had with farm tenants about proposals for gas storage in and around Duchy lands. [59688]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Neither I nor the Duchy of Lancaster office have had any discussions or requests for discussions with farm tenants about proposals for gas storage in and around Duchy lands.

Lords Appointments

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister without Portfolio whether a civil servant *(a)* attended on the Minister without Portfolio on the occasion when he signed statements for the Lords Appointments Committee from hospital and *(b)* carried such documents to or from the hospital. [60953]

Mr McCartney: During my stay in hospital I continued to receive and work on ministerial boxes. The boxes contained various items of correspondence addressed to me at the Cabinet Office including the certificates from the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1646W, on engagements, if he will list the public events the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster attended during the period. [59638]

Mr. Jim Murphy: During his period in office, the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster made regional visits to Monmouth, Northampton, Manchester and Birmingham; contributed to seminars on Active Citizenship, The Opportunity Society, Equality Diversity and Choice, Social Mobility and Personalisation in Public Services; and attended the Guardian Public Service Awards, the ACEVO Surer Funding Report Launch and the Duchy of Lancaster Christmas Carol Service.

IT Systems (Public Services)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what recent discussions he has had with Health Ministers on progress with the implementation of the NHS choose and book system; [60162]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on the frequency with which the UK worldheritage.org.uk website is used. [60164]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government's strategy for the use of technology to improve public services is set out in Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology (CM6683).

I regularly discuss these issues with ministerial colleagues.

No. 10 Downing Street

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 June 2005 to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws), *Official Report*, column 302W, on Downing Street (refurbishment), when he expects final decisions to be taken on upgrading the Cabinet Office estate; and who is responsible for taking such decisions. [59636]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Officials continue to develop design and procurement options for the refurbishment of the heritage Cabinet Office estate. Any decision will be subject to acceptance of a strong business case, both internally within the Cabinet Office and by Her Majesty's Treasury.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the KPMG contract for London 2012 Olympics has cost her Department to date. [60763]

Mr. Caborn: To date, the Department has paid £422,162 to KPMG for work on the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. This figure is higher than the original cost estimate, which reflects an extension of KPMG's work to provide ongoing analysis of the various elements of the costs of the 2012 Olympic Games.

Commonwealth Games

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what contributions from the public purse have been spent on the participation at the Commonwealth Games of those representing *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [59526]

Mr. Caborn: Sport in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, including Commonwealth Games teams is a devolved matter. However, with regard to the funding provided to athletes from Northern Ireland competing in the Commonwealth Games, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, on 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 317W.

Funding to our elite and aspiring athletes to help them train and compete at international sporting events, including the Commonwealth Games, is provided through the World Class Programmes administered by UK Sport and Sport England, as well as the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS).

The World Class Programme administered by UK Sport supports UK governing bodies and includes athletes from all parts of the UK. It targets funding at the UK's top athletes—both able bodied and disabled—to help them achieve consistent success in international competition and ultimately to bring home medals, usually in major competitions at European, World and Olympic/Paralympic level.

Sport England's World Class Programme is for English athletes primarily within English governing bodies and aims to assist the development of talented athletes with the potential to win medals, or equivalent, in significant future international competitions.

TASS funding is primarily used to support UK athletes aged between 18 and 25 studying in English educational institutions.

The total world class programme investment from 2002 until March 2006 in the 116 sports comprising the Commonwealth Games is in the region of £36 million by UK Sport and £70 million by Sport England. TASS investment across over 40 sports (including Commonwealth Games sports) during this period totals £7 million.

Additionally Sport England has invested £1.5 million in five sports (basketball, bowls, shooting, table tennis and weightlifting) specifically to support their preparation and attendance at the Games. Furthermore, Sport England has invested £1.8 million into this Commonwealth Games cycle through the Commonwealth Games Council for England which will have helped the preparation and attendance of athletes and officials in Melbourne.

Fininvest

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* representations she has received from and *(b)* discussions she and Ministers in her Department have held with companies owned by Fininvest. [59074]

James Purnell: DCMS Ministers have not received representations nor had discussions with companies owned by Fininvest.

Gambling

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of problem gamblers in Coventry, South. [60433]

Mr. Caborn: The current estimate is that 0.6 per cent. of the adult population of Great Britain are problem gamblers. This figure is drawn from the most recent authoritative research: Kerry Sproston, Bob Erens and Jim Orford (2000): "Gambling Behaviour in Britain: Results from the British Gambling Prevalence Study" (National Centre for Social Research, June 2000). This research was conducted using a sample of addresses selected at random. As such, it is not possible to provide results on a geographical basis.

Intergovernmental Accords

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the intergovernmental accords she has signed with the Italian Government. [59073]

James Purnell: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has entered into one accord with the Italian Government; a memorandum of understanding on digital switchover in 2004.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made on the simplification of the system for the listing of buildings; and what resources have been allocated to the listing process for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2007–08. [60701]

Mr. Lammy: A number of changes have recently been introduced to the listed building system. Since April 2005:

English Heritage has taken over the administration of the listed building system from DCMS;

DCMS and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have issued a public consultation on new listing criteria. Responses to that consultation are now being analysed;

For each new listing, English Heritage has introduced a new 'summary of significance' that sets out the reason for listing, and a map that shows the extent of the listing;

English Heritage now notifies owners and local authorities on applications to list buildings;

English Heritage has begun to design an information pack for owners to be introduced during 2006–07.

These changes are intended to simplify and streamline the system and make the listing process more open and understandable.

As part of its modernisation programme, English Heritage restructured its staff dealing with listing, scheduling and registration into a new Heritage Protection Department in 2005. In 2005–06 there were 56 full time staff in the Heritage Protection Department on a budget of £2.3 million. Within DCMS a team of 9.5 staff work on administration of listed building applications.

Resources for listing in 2007–08 will be determined in the light of further changes to the listing process and levels of applications.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding streams her Department plans to finance in 2006–07 to tackle social exclusion. [56087]

Tessa Jowell: Virtually every aspect of my Department's work is focussed on maximising participation in all areas of cultural and sporting activity. Particular efforts are devoted to reaching out to people who are socially excluded or for whatever reason may not feel they can participate. This ambition is underpinned by our PSA targets by which we monitor progress.

These targets drive cultural and sports programmes which play a key role in tackling the risks and causes of social exclusion including unemployment, poor educational attainment, poor physical and mental health and crime. For example, 80 per cent. of the £151 million funding for Creative Partnerships is delivered in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. Next year, over £10 million will be allocated towards funding 3,000 Community Sports Coaches, many of whom work directly with young people to tackle social exclusion. Through the Respect Action Plan, my Department will provide £1 million over three years to develop and expand the Sports Champion mentoring programme through which world class athletes inspire and motivate disaffected young people. I have also directed national lottery distributors to take account of the scope for reducing economic and social deprivation in designing the arts, sports and heritage grant programmes.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment her Department has made of the risk to the UK of avian influenza. [58341]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Highly pathogenic H5N1 has been confirmed in several EU Member States, including cases involving wild ducks and domestic turkeys near Lyon in France. These cases increase the likelihood that H5N1 may be found in the UK.

Precautionary measures are in place and we are keeping the risk under constant review in consultation with independent ornithological and meteorological experts and other stakeholders. We will not hesitate to introduce tighter controls if a change in the risk assessment justifies such action.

Badgers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons those who report or hand in badgers for the Road Traffic Accident Survey may not be told the result of those tests that are undertaken to determine whether the animal was a vector for bovine tuberculosis. [60403]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Seven Counties Road Traffic Accident Survey finished at the end of 2005. A major reason that results were not provided was to avoid the possibility that a positive badger might be assumed to be associated with a herd breakdown and lead to the illegal killing of badgers.

Departmental Research Projects

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research projects her Department and its predecessor has commissioned since 1997; and what are the names of the organisations contracted to carry out each piece of work. [60577]

Mr. Bradshaw: A full response to this question could be made only at disproportionate cost. Defra and its predecessor Departments have substantial research programmes. Defra currently spends around £160 million annually on research and at any one time has in the order of 1,500 ongoing projects with a large number of contractors.

However, Defra proactively publishes large amounts of data on its R and D projects through its website (http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/Default.asp). This includes information on "live" projects and those completed over recent years. It is also possible to access separate information on research contractors used through this site.

Farming

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of the number of farmers who are able to obtain up-to-date best practice information from her Department and other websites via the internet; [60053]

(2) if she will provide financial incentives to farmers to invest in internet access as part of their business planning. [60029]

Jim Knight: The best available estimate of the proportion of farmers with access to the internet in England is approximately two-thirds. However, this is based on information from the 2003 Agricultural Census, and the position is likely to have improved further since then. These farmers will be able to access a range of guidance from Defra and other departments via the Internet.

Defra aims to stimulate the take-up and effective use of ICT by all rural businesses. And we support the Community Broadband Network, for example, which provides mentoring and support to help communities access and make use of broadband services.

Financial help to farmers to support internet access is currently available through Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme. Further assistance may also be available from the Regional Development Agencies and local Business Link support services.

Farmers may soon be able to offset the cost of internet access under the Whole Farm Approach (WFA). This will lighten the regulatory burden that they face. The WFA will cut the time spent by an average farmer filling in forms. Further financial savings will come from more efficient inspections and the provision of advice.

However, the department continues to use a range of advice channels to communicate best practice and other guidance to farming businesses, including booklets or leaflets.

Gangmasters (Licensing) Act

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to expand the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 to cover other areas of responsibility; and what discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues on this issue. [60469]

Jim Knight: The Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 covers the supply of labour to undertake agricultural work and, processing and packing of agricultural, fish and shellfish products. It also covers the supply and use of workers to gather shellfish. We have no plans to extend the scope of the Act at this time and there has been no discussion with ministerial colleagues on this.

Regulations that will allow the Gangmasters Licensing Authority to commence processing licence applications were laid before the House on 13 March. These come into effect on 6 April with regulations for shellfish gathering due by October. The Government have also announced its intention to conduct a post implementation review, a year after licensing comes into effect, to ensure the burdens on business are proportionate to the risks involved.

Live Calves (Export)

Gwyn Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will meet bodies that represent farmers to discourage resumption of the export of live calves for rearing as veal on the continent; and if she will make a statement. [60137]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is in regular contact, on a range of issues, with bodies that represent farmers.

The Government would prefer a trade in meat to the long distance transport of live animals to slaughter, whether in the UK or across borders, and would like to see a lower limit for maximum journey times. However, once the current ban has been lifted, it will under EU law be the right of anyone wishing to do so to export live cattle provided they adhere to the rules on health and welfare. These rules will be vigorously enforced and officials are ensuring that those expressing an interest in exporting calves are aware of them.

Veal crates are banned in the EU from the end of this year and their use has already largely been phased out. Several EU countries have, like the UK, already banned veal crates.

Sheep Grazing

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors lay behind her decision to reduce payments made under the environmentally sensitive areas scheme for sheep grazing. [59863]

Jim Knight: The Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Scheme was introduced in 1987 to offer incentives to encourage farmers to adopt agricultural practices which would safeguard and enhance parts of the country of particularly high landscape, wildlife or historic value. The scheme has now closed to new applicants but there are still thousands of ongoing live agreements in place.

We have not reviewed ESA payment rates for existing agreement holders since 1999–2000 and there are no proposals to do so.

If the hon. Member would like to write to me I am happy to consider his points in more detail.

Waste and Resources Programme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to minimise the creation of waste; and if she will make a statement. [59895]

Mr. Bradshaw: In line with the Government's commitment to sustainable development, the Government's policy on waste minimisation seeks to break the link between economic growth and the amount of waste produced and to drive the management of waste up the waste hierarchy of reduction, re-use, recycling and composting, and energy recovery.

The Government's main driver for achieving waste minimisation is the waste implementation programme (WIP). The waste and resources action programme (WRAP) leads on delivering this work.

WRAP'S waste minimisation programme aims to reduce the growth of household waste from 3 percent to 2 percent by the end of the 2005–6 financial year. So far in the 2005–6 financial year, the programme has received around £20 million of funding for three initiatives:

the Home Composting scheme, which promotes home composting.

WRAP'S target is to divert 400,000 tonnes of waste from landfill by the end of April 2006;

the real nappy programme, which promotes the use of re-usable nappies; and the retailer initiative, through which WRAP is working with retailers to reduce the amount of waste from supermarkets. A related Innovation Fund provides funding for research and development into waste minimisation.

The retailer initiative will be important for delivering the Courtauld Commitment on minimising packaging and food waste from the thirteen top UK grocery retailers. Environment Secretary launched the agreement between WRAP and the retailers in July 2005. Next year, an additional element of WRAP'S work will be communications with consumers, with the aim of reducing household food waste.

The Government's business resource efficiency and waste (BREW) programme funds resource efficiency and waste minimisation programmes.

Various BREW delivery bodies are charged with returning £284 million, from additional landfill tax receipts, to business over three years. These include:

Envirowise, which provides resource efficiency advice and funds waste minimisation clubs;

the market transformation programme, which helps improve the resource efficiency of products and product information for consumers;

the national industrial symbiosis programme (NISP), which helps minimise waste by linking businesses that produce and use waste; and

the DTI technology programme, which facilitates research and development into resource efficiency, including in the area of waste management.

The Government's food industry sustainability strategy, which will be published shortly, challenges the food manufacturing industry to reduce the quantity of waste that it produces by between 15 and 20 percent. by 2010.

Through its research and data programmes, the Government are investing in developing a sound evidence base on waste minimisation practices and opportunities. So far in the 2005–6 financial year, DEFRA has committed over £2 million to waste minimisation related research and development projects under its waste research and resources programme. Although research so far has largely centred on household waste prevention the programme is also funding some minimisation projects related to commercial and industrial waste (including a £225,000 project, "Understanding and Predicting Construction Waste").

DEFRA is currently reviewing its waste strategy, which it published in 2000. On 14 February DEFRA published a consultation document on the review, which proposed a greater focus on waste prevention and resource efficiency to further decouple waste creation from economic growth. DEFRA's work to establish evidence bases on sustainable consumption and production and waste, including research and review work on the flows of resources through the economy, are important linked programmes in underpinning this strategic priority.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department plans to continue to provide financial support to the Waste and Resources Programme after the end of March for its programme to encourage and promote the use of real nappies. [59330]

Mr. Bradshaw: WRAP has only sought funding to enable it to withdraw from this activity, by meeting existing commitments. That is what we shall be providing.

Wild Bird Imports

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report,* column 11W, on wild bird imports, what her policy is on making permanent the EU's temporary ban on the import of all wild birds. [60566]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government currently have an open mind on this issue and is seeking views from interested parties on the issues surrounding such a ban, particularly in relation to animal health and welfare, conservation, livelihoods and illegal trade.

The European Commission has been asked to look at this issue and has commissioned the European Food Safety Authority to prepare an opinion on the animal health and welfare aspects of the trade in wild birds. This is due to report in October 2006.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the terms of reference are of her Department's internal review of the extension of the ban on the wild bird trade; and on what date she expects that review to report to Ministers. [60152]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU ban on imports of captive wild birds from third countries is due to expire on 31 May 2006.

We are awaiting proposals from the European Commission on whether to extend the ban, or to lift it (in full or in part), taking into account the ongoing disease situation worldwide. UK experts will examine these proposals, consider the associated disease risks, and prepare our position accordingly.

We will also be taking into account the recommendations made in the independent review of avian quarantine which was published on 15 December 2005. We will publish the Government response to this report shortly.

World Heritage Sites

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which Minister in her Department has responsibility for issues relating to world heritage sites. [59100]

Jim Knight: Lead responsibility for policy on World Heritage Sites rests with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Department for Culture, Media and Sports works closely with relevant Government Departments on all issues affecting World Heritage Sites. Within Defra, I am the Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity, with responsibility for issues concerning World Heritage sites which fall within this Department's policy remit.

The only World Heritage site for the natural environment is for the Jurassic Coast within my constituency of South Dorset. Decisions relating to this site would therefore by made by another Defra minister.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Delegated Legislation Committees

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Leader of the House on how many occasions in the last two years a division has been recorded in a standing committee on delegated legislation. [60755]

Nigel Griffiths: The information for the last two completed sessions and the current session is given in the following table:

Number

Session	*Delegated Legislation committee meetings*	*Instruments considered*	*Divisions*
2003–04	149	185	29
2004–05	92	117	8
2005–06 (to 17 March)	132	150	14

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Payments Provision

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 860W, on benefit payments provision, how much debt owed to the Department has been recovered by private sector partners under the Enforcement Initiative. [51395]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Enforcement Initiative was set up in April 2004 to utilise the services of the private sector to assist the Department's debt collection activities.

Up to and including 31 January 2006 the initiative has recovered an overall total of £22.22 million. Of this £11.54 million has been collected directly by the private sector: this is made up of £4.70 million in corporate debt recovery and £6.84 million in benefit debt recovery.

Child Maintenance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the proportion of parents with care on income support and income-based jobseeker's allowance who are receiving maintenance for their children. [41435]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested can be found in table 13 of the CSA's Quarterly Summary Statistics (QSS) document, a copy of which is available in the House Library.

For convenience, the relevant table is reproduced as follows.

QSS table 13: percentage of parents with care on income support or jobseeker's allowance (income based) in receipt of maintenance

			Percentage
Quarter ending	*Overall agency*	*New scheme*	*Old scheme*
February 2003	25	n/a	25
February 2004	23	24	23
May 2004	23	28	22
August 2004	23	31	22
November 2004	24	34	21
February 2005	24	34	20
May 2005	25	36	19
August 2005	25	36	19

Notes:

1. The above includes those old-scheme cases with a full maintenance assessment, and those new-scheme cases with either a full maintenance calculation, or a default maintenance decision. Old-scheme cases with a punitive interim maintenance assessment are excluded from this analysis in line with the Agency's target definition, as are new-scheme cases being processed clerically.
2. The Child Support Agency's PSA target was to "double the proportion of parents with care on income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance who receive maintenance for their children to 60 per cent. by March 2006". This target has been rolled forward under SR2004 and increased to 65 per cent. by March 2008.
3. A parent with care is deemed to be on income support or jobseeker's allowance (income based) if they or their partner are in receipt of either benefit.
4. Old-scheme data from the old computer system (CSCS) are matched with administrative data from the benefits system to obtain the current benefit status of the parent with care. Those parents with care who are not themselves on benefit, but whose partner is, are excluded from this analysis due to lack of available data. It is not possible to match old and new scheme data from the new IT system (CS2) with administrative data from the benefits system, so this information is recorded as that held on the CSA system.
5. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.
6. Robust data from the new IT system (CS2) covering the period March 2003—March 2004 is not currently available, and is under development.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the accuracy rate of Child Support Agency assessments since 1 January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [41406]

Mr. Plaskitt: Although accuracy is not as high as we would want there are some signs of improvement. The Agency's Operational Improvement Plan outlines how changes in processes will drive up accuracy standards.

Accuracy levels can be found in table 17 of the CSA's Quarterly Summary Statistics (QSS) document, a copy of which is available in the House Library.

For convenience, the relevant table is reproduced as follows.

CSA table 17: accuracy of maintenance calculations and assessments

		Percentage
	New scheme	*Old scheme*
April 2003—March 2004	82	86
April 2004—March 2005	75	78
April 2005—December 2005	83	84

Notes:

1. The Agency target for accuracy in 2005–06 is that by 31 March 2006 accuracy on the last decision made for all maintenance calculations (new scheme) and assessments (old scheme) checked in the year to be correct to the nearest penny in at least 90 per cent. of new scheme cases and 82 per cent. of old scheme cases.
2. Measurement of Agency performance against this target is based on checks carried out on a sample of cases that grows cumulatively throughout the year, and is designed to provide an optimal level of precision for the estimate of Agency accuracy at any financial year end.
3. While it is possible to derive year to date performance at any point within the reporting period in order to provide an indicative guide as to current (cumulative) performance, comparisons between individual months (particularly towards the beginning of the reporting period) are subject to sampling variation, meaning that any time series may not be wholly reflective of actual trends in performance. For this reason, figures have been provided for financial years for the period April 2003 to March 2005, and year to date for the current reporting year.
4. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.
5. The figures included in this table do not themselves have national statistics status, but are included in this publication in order to give a fuller picture of CSA performance.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff *(a)* were employed by the Child Support Agency in each month since December 2003 and *(b)* are expected to be so employed in each month to March 2006, expressed in terms of (i) actual staff numbers and (iii) full-time equivalent staff; and if he will make a statement. [45031]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 25 January 2006]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty dated, 23 March 2006:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff *(a)* were employed by the Child Support Agency in each month since December 2003 and *(b)* are expected to be so employed in each month to March 2006 expressed in terms of (i) actual staff numbers and (ii) full-time equivalent staff; and if he will make a statement."

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

The table below contains all the information available on the number of actual staff and full/whole time equivalent staff in post in the months requested. The figures for all months up to and including November 2005 are actual figures sourced from the Department's shared payroll system. The figures include fixed-term appointments and temporary staff, but not Northern Ireland staff (who are part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service).

The Secretary of State announced on the 9th February the new Operational Improvement Plan for the Agency. The staffing for the Agency for future years will be agreed in due course.

Month	*Full-time equivalent*	*Headcount*
December 2003	10527.76	11721
January 2004	10671.76	11901
February 2004	10723.27	11979
March 2004	10819.02	12083
April 2004	10760.56	12026
May 2004	10635.28	11892
June 2004	10671.76	11901
July 2004	10380.3	11612
August 2004	10099.43	11213
September 2004	10076.78	11285
October 2004	9886.23	11088
November 2004	9844.26	11041
December 2004	9809.96	11008
January 2005	9737.67	10932
February 2005	9721.41	10923
March 2005	9784.26	10994
April 2005	9798.23	11009
May 2005	9772.12	10969
June 2005	9827.08	11020
July 2005	9859.89	11054
August 2005	9914.22	11108
September 2005	10076.55	11284
October 2005	10291	11524
November 2005	10491.01	11750

I hope this is helpful.

Correspondence

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords were dealt with by his Department in each year since 1995 in respect of the percentage his Department took (A) more than one month and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if he will make a statement. [37414]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service. This response includes information for the 2001–02 parliamentary session onwards.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005 (column 137–40ws). Reports for previous years are available in the Library of the House. Information on letters from members of the public to the Department's Ministers is available in the Department's departmental report, which is published annually and can be found in the Library of the House. Information about letters from hon. Members and members of the public to officials in the Department is not collected centrally and could only be collected at disproportionate cost to the Department.

Information about Lords parliamentary questions is not available in this format and could only be collected at disproportionate cost to the Department. Information about Commons parliamentary questions is set out in the following table.

Per cent

Parliamentary session	*Proportion of Commons parliamentary questions that were answered more than twenty working days after being tabled*	*Proportion of Commons parliamentary questions that were answered more than sixty working days after being tabled*
2001–02	22	4
2002–03	13	1
2003–04	10	1
2004–05	6	0
2005–06	22	4

Note:

The 2005–06 figures are for the period up to 31 December 2005. Twenty working days is used as an equivalent to one month and sixty working days is used as an equivalent to three months.

Council Tax Benefit

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average amount of council tax benefit is in payment to those aged over 60. [60765]

Mr. Plaskitt: As at August 2005, the average weekly amount of council tax benefit in payment to those aged 60 and over in Great Britain was £13.61.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average award of council tax benefit was in each local authority area in the latest period for which figures are available. [60766]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information has been placed in the Library.

Debt Management

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many letters his Department sent to clients as part of its debt management activity in each quarter since Q2 2001. [52498]

Mr. Plaskitt: This information is not available.

Departmental Assets

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 596W, on departmental assets, what estimate he has made of the cost of providing the information requested. [49868]

Mr. Plaskitt: The determination of a "disproportionate cost" response is made when the costs incurred in preparing the answer exceeds the stated £600 cost threshold. The costs that will be incurred to answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 596W on departmental assets were significantly above this threshold.

We were unable to provide the information requested as the details are not currently held centrally or in the format requested. To collate the required data would involve requesting information from approximately

1,700 departmental sites and a clerical correlation of the information. We estimate the cost to be approximately £16,000.

Overpayments

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time was between an unrecovered overpayment being identified and a letter being sent to the debtor in each quarter since 2001. [52500]

Mr. Plaskitt: This information is not available.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department recovered from erroneous payments but has been unable to allocate to a specific debt case in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [52507]

Mr. Plaskitt: We are not able to provide the figures requested. If the Department is unable to allocate receipts, it cannot specifically identify them as relating to debt repayments. All reasonable, practical and cost effective steps are taken to allocate receipts. If this is not successful, the money is surrendered to HM Treasury as Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts.

Pension Policy

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department has a model to predict the distributional outcomes of changes to pension policy; and if he will make a statement. [59840]

Mr. Timms: The Department uses a number of models to assess the distributional impact of changes to pension policy. These include models which calculate changes in pension outcomes for illustrative individuals, and more complex models which simulate the effects on a representative sample of pensioners. All such models provide an illustration of potential distributional effects under a particular set of assumptions, rather than a prediction of outcomes.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency use the Post Office Card Account to receive benefits and pensions. [58079]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

Information showing the number of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account for each parliamentary constituency has been placed in the Library.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59280]

Mr. Plaskitt: There is no single definition of a small firm with terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (Small and Medium sized Enterprise) being used interchangeably. However, two of the most common definitions are those provided by the European Union and the Companies Act 1985. The Department uses the European Union definition consisting of headcount, turnover or balance sheet total.

TRANSPORT

A47 Multi-modal Study

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in implementing the conclusions of the A47 Norwich to Peterborough multi-modal study which reported in 2003. [59629]

Dr. Ladyman: Our response to the study in July 2003 asked the Highways Agency to monitor traffic flows and performance of the A47 and to implement small scale safety and management measures as part of its route management strategy. They were also asked to consider the case for smaller scale bypasses to the villages of Middleton and East Winch and to review the case later in the decade for upgrades between A1 and Sutton and between North Tuddenham and Easton. The Department recently received advice from the region on priorities for transport investment. We are currently considering this advice and expect to make announcements, including announcements relevant to the A47 corridor, later in the spring.

We also provided Norfolk county council with funding, through the local transport plan programme of £1.395 million in December 2003 for a package of measures including the refurbishment of King's Lynn bus station and improved integration with the railway station; creation of a high-quality multi-modal interchange facility at Thetford railway station; improved bus stop infrastructure in Downham Market and pedestrian and cycling signing in market towns.

A47/A11

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to tackle congestion on the *(a)* A47 and *(b)* A11 in Norfolk. [59623]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency recently completed a congestion study report on the A47 between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth. The aim of the study was to identify where congestion occurs, is likely to occur in the future and to propose suitable remedial measures. A similar congestion study will be carried out next year on the A11, subject to funding.

In line with the recently published public service agreement (PSA) target, the agency is now working to improve journey time reliability by preventing and clearing incidents efficiently, providing improved information to road users and through better planning of roadworks. This is in addition to completing road improvements, such as the A11 Attleborough Bypass.

Bus Services

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Kick Start programme in helping to establish new sustainable bus services; and whether he plans to set up further bidding rounds. [60705]

Dr. Ladyman: Kickstart projects awarded funding in 2003 in the initial pilot phase of the scheme are making good progress. Local authorities and operators are now taking forward the 43 projects awarded funding in November last year. We, jointly with the Scottish Executive, have recently commissioned consultants to carry out an evaluation of the Kickstart programme. The results of this will be available early next year. No decisions have yet been taken on future Kickstart competitions.

Bus Subsidy (Greater London)

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much bus subsidy has been provided in the Greater London area in each of the last 10 years. [60178]

Dr. Ladyman: The following tables outline bus subsidy awarded in London between 1994–95 to 2004–05:

Bus subsidy in London (not adjusted for inflation)

£ million

	Public transport support[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]	*Concessionary fare reimbursement*[7, 8]	*Bus service operators grant*[9]	*Total (+ BSOG)*	*RPI deflator*
At cash prices					
1994–95[4]	55	100	No data	155	1.286
1995–96[4]	30	103	29	162	1.251
1996–97[4]	12	106	29	147	1.209
1997–98[4]	1	110	30	141	1.174
1998–99[4]	12	113	37	162	1.144
1999–2000[4]	10	117	46	173	1.122
2000–01[4]	84	119	47	250	1.108
2001–02[5]	186	129	56	371	1.081
2002–03[5]	421	128	66	615	1.048
2003–04[6]	560	132	80	772	1.021
2004–05	549	143	91	783	1.000
Percentage change over:					
1 year	-2	8	13	1	—
10 years	898	43	—	405	—

[1] From administrative returns to ODPM.

[2] Includes depreciation and renewal grant.

[3] London data reflect changes at the time of preparation for the privatisation of LBL's buses.

[4] From 1994–95 this was funded by L.T. From 2000–01 TFL took strategic control of London's bus network.

[5] Operating loss of London Buses Ltd., as stated in their management accounts.

[6] The congestion charge in central London raised funds which have not been set against expenditure in the table.

[7] Concessionary fare reimbursement is a subsidy to the passenger rather than the operator.

[8] Concessionary fare schemes for children became available in some areas from 26 October 1986. Free travel for those under 16 in London from September 2005.

[9] Bus Service Operators Grant replaced Fuel Duty Rebate. It is paid by DFT directly to bus operators.

Source:

Local authority returns to ODPM (Revenue Out-turn RO2).

Bus subsidy in London (real terms)

£ million

	Public transport support[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]	*Concessionary fare reimbursement*[7, 8]	*Bus service operators grant*[9]	*Total (+ BSOG)*	*RPI deflator*
At 2004–05 prices					
1994–95[4]	71	129	No data	199	1.286
1995–96[4]	38	129	36	203	1.251
1996–97[4]	15	128	35	178	1.209
1997–98[4]	1	129	35	165	1.174
1998–99[4]	14	129	42	185	1.144
1999–2000[4]	11	131	52	194	1.122
2000–01[4]	93	132	52	277	1.108
2001–02[5]	201	139	61	401	1.081
2002–03[5]	441	134	69	645	1.048
2003–04[6]	572	135	82	789	1.021
2004–05	549	143	91	783	1.000
Percentage change over:					
1 year	-4	6	11	-1	—
10 years	676	11	—	293	—

[1] From administrative returns to ODPM.

[2] Includes depreciation and renewal grant.

[3] London data reflect changes at the time of preparation for the privatisation of LBL's buses.

[4] From 1994–95 this was funded by L.T. From 2000–01 TFL took strategic control of London's bus network.

[5] Operating loss of London Buses Ltd., as stated in their management accounts.

[6] The congestion charge in central London raised funds which have not been set against expenditure.

[7] Concessionary fare reimbursement is a subsidy to the passenger rather than the operator.

[8] Concessionary fare schemes for children became available in some areas from 26 October 1986. Free travel for those under 16 in London from September 2005.

[9] Bus Service Operators Grant replaced Fuel Duty Rebate. It is paid by DFT directly to bus operators.

Source:

Local authority returns to ODPM (Revenue Out-turn RO2).

Concessionary Travel

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether local authorities are required to spend the funding allocation for the concessionary travel scheme entirely on the provision of transport. [60830]

Dr. Ladyman: The funding for concessionary fares is unhypothecated; therefore the funding for concessionary fares is not separately identified. It is for local authorities to decide on their overall funding priorities based on their judgment of local need and circumstances.

GNER

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of the East Coast Main Line franchise's performance indicators were met by the train operator in *(a)* the 12 months prior to the new franchise being awarded in March 2005 and *(b)* the 12 months after the awarding of the franchise. [60373]

Derek Twigg: GNER met all its franchise obligations in the 12 months prior to the commencement of its new franchise. Three franchise commitments were carried over into the new franchise agreement at the request of the Department for Transport. Since the commencement of the new franchise agreement, GNER has met all its obligations to date.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of GNER's timetabled train services were cancelled in *(a)* the 12 months prior to the new franchise being awarded and *(b)* the 12 months after the awarding of the franchise. [60374]

Derek Twigg: The number of GNER's timetabled train services cancelled in the 12 months prior to the commencement of the new franchise (29 May 2004 to 30 April 2005 was 974 cancellations.

The number of GNER's timetabled train services cancelled in the 10 months since the start of the new franchise (28 May 2005 to 4 February 2006 is 393 cancellations.

Foreign Registered Aircraft

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to report on the outcome of the consultation in respect of foreign registered aircraft based in the UK. [61120]

Derek Twigg: We have received a large response to this consultation and are currently working on a summary of these responses. We hope to have this document finalised shortly. Once this is done the document will be published on the Department's website and a copy will be sent to all those who responded to the consultation. This document will give an analysis of the responses received and explain how these have informed the Department's views.

Highway Code

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on revisions to The Highway Code; and who is being consulted thereon. [60080]

Dr. Ladyman: A periodical review of The Highway Code is currently taking place. Consultation on the proposed changes to the Code began on the 15 February and will conclude on the 10 May, with a view to publishing the revised Code during spring 2007. Significant proposed changes to the Code are set out in the DSA's consultation letter dated 15 February. All proposed changes are highlighted in the draft revised Code. DSA's letter, draft revised Code and list of organisations sent the consultation package can be found on the following website www.dsa.gov.uk/highwaycode/where anyone can suggest amendments to the Code.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has given the Driving Standards Agency on changes to the provisions relating to cyclists in the consultation on amendments to The Highway Code; and if he will make a statement. [60252]

Dr. Ladyman: The Driving Standards Agency is taking forward the revision of The Highway Code, under Section 38 of The Road Traffic Act 1988. The consultation draft of the Highway Code, including the provisions relating to cyclists, represents the initial view of the Department for Transport, including the Driving Standards Agency, as a basis for public consultation. Much of it is similar to the previous version, with suggested changes to bring it up to date with current circumstances. We will carefully consider the responses to the public consultation before taking any final decisions on the Code's revised content.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has given the Driving Standards Agency on framing the planned consultation on the revision of The Highway Code. [60253]

Dr. Ladyman: The framework for revising The Highway Code is set out in Section 38 of The Road Traffic Act 1988. The consultation is also being done in accordance with the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation.

M20

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents there were on the M20 starting at Trottiscliffe Road Bridge at junction 3 down to the on and off slips at junction 5 in 2005, broken down by *(a)* fatal, *(b)* serious and *(c)* slight. [59158]

Dr. Ladyman: In 2005 there have been 37 accidents on the M20 starting at Trottiscliffe Road Bridge at Junction 3 down to the on and off slips at Junction 5. The table shows the number of accidents broken down by degree of seriousness of personal injury.

Number of accidents: from Trottiscliffe Road Bridge to Junction 5 before on/off slips

	Fatal	*Serious*	*Slight*
1 February-30 September 2005	1	2	22
1 October-31 December 2005[1]	0	2	10
Total	1	4	32

[1] provisional data

Public Transport (Accidents)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents involving *(a)* buses and *(b)* trains were recorded in (i) each English region, (ii) the Tees Valley and (iii) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in the last period for which figures are available. [59927]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of personal injury road accidents involving one or more buses in each English region, the Tees Valley and Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in 2004 (the latest year for which figures are available) are shown in the table.

	Personal injury road accidents involving one or more buses
North East	602
North West	856
North West	1,184
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,015
East Midlands	473
West Midlands	719
Eastern	486
South East	985
London	2,939
South West	582
England	8,985
Tees Valley[1]	100
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland[2]	4

[1] Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Darlington unitary authorities.

[2] The accidents in the table are those that occurred within the 2004 boundary for the constituency.

Information on accidents involving trains are published in the Health and Safety Executive's annual report on railway safety (http://www.hse.gov.uk/railways/annualreport04/index.htm), which is also available from the House of Commons Library. While most of the information is only available at a national (Great Britain) level, limited information (including fatal incidents) is available at county level.

Railways

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he received from *(a)* Transport for London, *(b)* regional transport boards and *(c)* passenger action groups about proposals to extend the Mayor of London's rail powers beyond the London boundary before his Department's consultation launch in March 2006. [60408]

Derek Twigg: Ministers and officials have engaged with a range of key stakeholders in developing the consultation proposals, including Transport for London and Regional Transport Boards.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* incidents of and *(b)* prosecutions for (i) vandalism and (ii) trespass on (A) railway lines and (B) underground lines in London by (1) adults and (2) juveniles there were in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [60563]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 101W given to the hon. Member for Brent, East (Sarah Teather).

Regional Transport Prioritisation

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department requires local public consultation as part of the Regional Transport Prioritisation process. [60222]

Dr. Ladyman: In launching the Regional Funding Allocations process last year we were looking to obtain a clear view of what each region saw as the priorities for spending in their region across the interrelated fields of housing, transport and economic development. In doing this we recognised there could be different factors at play in different regions, and so did not prescribe the exact approach which regions should follow in preparing their advice. However, guidance issued to the regions last July made clear that advice should, as far as possible, represent wide agreement across each region on what the region's priorities were and that it would be more credible to Government if it was the product of a wide consensus.

Road Traffic Accidents (Wild Animals)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents involving deer were reported in 2004–05; and how many such accidents resulted in serious injury or fatality to drivers and passengers. [60461]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not collect information on personal injury road traffic accidents involving deer.

Rural Transport Services

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to disseminate best practice in providing innovative rural transport services. [60703]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department's Rural Bus Challenge scheme has provided funding for the development of many innovative projects which have successfully demonstrated the potential of new approaches to meeting rural transport needs.

We have also published the following good practice guides relevant to rural transport:

Good Practice Guide on Flexible Transport Services (July 2002)

Good Practice Guide on the Delivery of Transport in Rural Areas (Oct 2003)

Intermode—Innovations in Demand Responsive Transport (in conjunction with Greater Manchester PTE) (June 2004)

Good Practice Guide—Integrated Transport Measures in National Parks (Aug 2005)

All these documents are available on the Department's website.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what support his Department *(a)* has given in the 2005–06 financial year and *(b)* plans to give in the 2006–07 financial year for rural transport services. [60704]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government are committed to improving public transport in rural areas. Local and central Government provides funding of £1.7 billion annually to support bus services, including those in rural areas.

We have allocated grant to local authorities specifically for the support of rural bus services mainly in the form of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (RBSG). In 2005–06 RBSG totalled £53 million. This will rise to £54.3 million in 2006–07.

Last year we announced 'Kickstart' support, totalling £20 million, for 43 projects involving new and improved bus services which will become viable through growth in passenger numbers after an initial period of pump-priming from Government funds. 11 of these schemes will serve areas which are mainly rural in character.

UK Airports (General Aviation Reports)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether *(a)* civil and *(b)* state aircraft landing at UK airports are required to submit a completed general aviation report to (i) HM Revenue and Customs, (ii) UK police and (iii) Home Office immigration authorities. [59298]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

(a) Scheduled civil aircraft are not required to complete a general aviation report form. Non-scheduled civil aircraft are required to complete a combined general aviation report form to HMRC who then forward it to the local Police special branch and Home Office immigration authorities.

(b) State aircraft arriving at UK designated airports are not required to complete a general aviation report form.

Vehicle Registrations

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will invalidate the registration of motor vehicles at 25 Duke Street, Chelmsford. [60268]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* I cannot comment on individual cases. The law does not allow a vehicle to be deregistered.

TREASURY

Bowel Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list correspondence between his Department and the Department of Health on the funding for the proposed bowel cancer screening programme; and if he will place the correspondence in the Library. [60831]

Mr. Des Browne: Treasury Ministers and officials have regular discussions with the Department of Health on a range of expenditure issues. No correspondence focussed specifically on the subject of funding for the proposed bowel cancer screening programme has been found.

Electoral Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the electoral registration rates were in the period *(a)* before and *(b)* after 13 March 2006 in each ward in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, grouped according to constituency and region and listed in descending order. [60916]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 23 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the electoral registration rates were in the period *(a)* before and *(b)* after 13th March in each ward in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, grouped according to constituency and region and listed in descending order. (60916)

Ward level population estimates are needed to compare the number of registered electors and the estimated population in each ward. The latest available population estimates at ward level for England and Wales are for 30 June 2002 and for Northern Ireland the latest available ward level population data are from the 2001 Census (29 April 2001).

A comparison, using these data, has been provided previously. I refer you to the answer given by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in the Official Report dated 20th December 2005, Column 2809W (Wales) and in the Official Report dated 19th January 2006, Column 1490 (England and Northern Ireland).

No information is available for either electorate counts or ward level population estimates for any date following 13 March 2006.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60343]

John Healey: I refer to my answer to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 733W. Additional measures taken since then include the upgrading and installation of improved controls of the air handling units in the building, and a planned change from night to daytime cleaning, which will further reduce lighting usage.

Mobile Phones

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people in London who had a mobile phone in each year since 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [60564]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 23 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the number of people in London who had a mobile phone in each year since 2004–05. (60564)

This data is not available. Up to and including 2005 we asked whether mobile phones were used by anyone in the household. So, if like most households, several people have mobiles, we'd only count it as one household with a mobile phone(s). Information relating to the use of Information and Communication Technologies by households and individuals are collected through the ICT access module of the ONS' Omnibus survey. The module is run three times within the first quarter of each year.

From January we have reworded the question to target individuals, but the results are not yet available.

Mortality Rates (Carlisle)

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the mortality rate was for *(a)* chronic lung disease, *(b)* all forms of cancer and *(c)* coronary heart disease in Carlisle in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2004; and what the (A) neonatal and (B) perinatal mortality rate was in Carlisle in these years. [60327]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 23 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the *(a)* mortality rate for (i) chronic lung disease, (ii) coronary heart disease and (iii) all forms of cancer, *(b)* neonatal mortality rate and *(c)* perinatal mortality rate was in Carlisle in (A) 1997 and (B) the last year for which figures are available.

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. These are provided in the table. The table also shows figures for 1997, adjusted to take account of revisions to the International Classification of Diseases, where appropriate.

Death rates[1] from chronic lung disease, malignant cancers and coronary heart disease[2] and neonatal[3] and perinatal[4] death rates for Carlisle local authority[5], 1997 and 2004[6].

	Mortality rates	
	1997	*2004*
Chronic lung disease	41.1	37.5
Cancer	208.5	199.9
Coronary heart disease	182.3	137.4
Neonatal deaths	7.0	1.7
Perinatal deaths	12.2	7.8

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.

[2] The causes of death for 2004 were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10):
Chronic lung disease (Chronic lower respiratory disease)—ICD-10 J40-J47.
Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—/CD-70 COO-C97.
Coronary heart disease—ICD-10120–125.
Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
The causes of death for 1997 were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used are listed:
Chronic lung disease (Chronic lower respiratory disease)—ICD-9 490–494, 496.
Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-9 140–208.
Coronary heart disease-ICD-9 410–414.
The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in England and Wales in 2001 means that data for chronic lung disease and cancer are not completely comparable with data for years before this date. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from these causes is described in a report published in May 2002:
Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. Health Statistics Quarterly 14 (2002), 75–83.
For chronic lung disease (chronic lower respiratory disease) and cancer (malignant neoplasms) the introduction of ICD-10 caused an increase of 3.2 per cent. and 2.3per cent. respectively in the number of deaths coded to these conditions in England and Wales. Deaths in 1997 from these causes have been adjusted to provide rates which are comparable with those for 2004.

[3] Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 live births.

[4] Deaths under one week plus stillbirths per 1,000 total live and stillbirths.

[5] Usual residents of Hyndburn local authority. Deaths were assigned to this area using the November 2005 All Fields Postcode Directory.

[6] Deaths registered in each calendar year.

Home Workers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate the Office for National Statistics has made of the number of home workers; and how the number has changed since 1997. [60103]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 23 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about home workers. [60103]

The attached table gives the number of people in employment who were home workers, for the three months ending November each year from 1997 to 2005.

Estimates are taken from the Office for National Statistics's Labour Force Survey (LFS). As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Number of people working from home[1] United Kingdom, not seasonally adjusted

Thousand

		Homeworkers[1]	
Three months ending November, each year	*Total[2]*	*Works mainly in own home*	*Works in different places using home as a base*
1997	2,437	691	1,746
1998	2,618	664	1,954
1999	2,686	635	2,052
2000	2,660	685	1,975
2001	2,774	692	2,082
2002	2,938	702	2,235
2003	3,075	740	2,335
2004	3,095	763	2,333
2005	3,233	782	2,451

[1] Home workers are people who work mainly in their own home, or in different places using home as a base, in their main job.

[2] Excludes those who did not answer the homeworking questions.

Source:

ONS, Labour Force Survey

Recycled Paper

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much income was raised from tax on *(a)* recycled paper and *(b)* virgin pulp in the last period for which figures are available. [60224]

John Healey: This information is not available. HM Revenue and Customs does not collect data at this level of detail on international trade or on VAT from individual goods and services.

Revenue and Customs

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment has been made by HM Revenue and Customs of the likely impact of closure of its Basingstoke office on residents and local businesses in Basingstoke; and whether the Department has completed an equality impact assessment of the closure. [58932]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC carries out a detailed social, economic and service delivery impact assessment as part of the process of looking at individual locations which may be subject to reorganisation. This assessment includes the effect on staff and the provision of services for customers.

Stock Transactions Stamp Duty

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue the stamp duty on stock transactions raised in each year since its introduction. [60346]

John Healey: Receipts from stamp taxes on share transactions for 1999–2000 to 2004–05 are available on the HM Revenue and Customs website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/15_1_sep05.xls.

Receipts for previous years, where the information is available, can be obtained from the publication "Inland Revenue Statistics", which is available in the Library of the House.

Tax Credits

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what statistics the Government collect on the distribution of earned income excluding tax credits. [60616]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 23 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question concerning what statistics the Government collect on the distribution of earned income, excluding tax credits. (60616)

The main source of earnings statistics is the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). This is an employer-based annual survey which is used to produce income broken down by age, gender, and workplace characteristics.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly survey of households which allows the production of income statistics broken down by personal characteristics such as ethnicity and disability.

The Family Resources Survey is a household survey collected by the DWP recording information on gross and net pay, fringe benefits, and sources of income.

In addition, the Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey is an employer-based survey used to calculate short term earnings indices (for example the Average Earnings Index) indicating changes in mean earnings. The statistics are available from http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nscl.asp?ID = 8242.

Other surveys do contain earnings questions, but these are not the main focus of the survey and are not generally used in the production of National Statistics.

HMRC publishes statistics on earned income distributions, for income taxpayers only, which is available on their website; http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#36.

The HMRC earned income information is based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes.

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many photographs of domestic properties in England the Valuation Office Agency stores digitally. [56213]

Dawn Primarolo: The total number of domestic properties in England, as the total number of properties is currently around 22 million.

The Valuation Office Agency holds photographs linked to 2.5 per cent. of domestic properties in England.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of the pay scheme documentation, including incentive schemes, which is in operation for Valuation Office Agency staff. [60100]

John Healey: Copies of the documentation regarding the Valuation Office Agency's pay structure and incentive scheme have been placed in the Library as requested.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay

20. **Daniel Kawczynski:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality, if she will make a statement on the gender pay gap. [60693]

Meg Munn: The Government are determined to take action to address the causes of the gender pay gap highlighted by the Women and Work Commission in their report published last month and will issue an action plan within six months.

Sunday Trading

22. **Mr. Andy Reed:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality, what assessment she has made of the impact on work-life balance of liberalising Sunday trading hours. [60695]

Meg Munn: We are currently asking for views on all aspects of the impact of further liberalisation of Sunday trading hours.

Houses of Parliament

24. **David Taylor:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality, what recent assessment she has made of the gender balance in the membership of the Houses of Parliament; and if she will make a statement. [60697]

Meg Munn: The numbers of women MPs continues to increase—nearly 20 per cent. of MPs are now women compared with 9 per cent. before 1997. There are now 134 female peers in the House of Lords (18.5 per cent.). The UK is ranked 14th within the EU and internationally, 50th in the Inter-Parliamentary Union table of women's political representation. In the Devolved Administrations we are doing particularly well—50 per cent. of the Welsh MPs are women and 40 per cent. of Scottish MPs are women. Positive measures such as those included in the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act are necessary as there are more than 500 male MPs in the House of Commons now, but in the course of the history of the House, there have only ever been 291 women MPs.

Domestic Violence

25. James Brokenshire: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality, what steps the Government are taking to address violence in the home; and if she will make a statement. [60698]

Meg Munn: Building on the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, our updated national delivery plan, due to be launched on 28 March, is a comprehensive response to domestic violence. It aims to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence, ensure victims are adequately protected and increase the rate of reporting and successful prosecutions. The Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence, on which I sit, will oversee implementation.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality if she will discuss with the Home Secretary the possibility of the courts being provided with the power to include restraining orders in the sentencing of perpetrators of domestic violence. [60377]

Meg Munn: I sit on the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence which is chaired by my noble friend Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC: the Home Office Minister of State for the Criminal Justice System and the lead Minister for domestic violence. This group provides the mechanism for performance managing the national delivery plan for domestic violence which includes the implementation of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004.

The Act has been rolling out in stages since March 2005. Providing courts with the power to include restraining orders in the sentencing of perpetrators is not yet implemented. The timing of the implementation of this measure is currently being negotiated between the Home Office and the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

Careers Advice

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the merits of providing girls with advice on the way in which their career choices may impact their future pay and progression. [60382]

Meg Munn: Government recognise that the career choices made by girls at school could affect their earnings potential. The Women and Work Commission report that two-thirds of young women would have considered a wider range of career options had they known of the different pay rates.

The 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper sets out an agenda that offers all young people wider choice of what and where to learn, and sets out clear objectives for information, advice and guidance that includes young people understanding the options open to them and their potential implications.

One of the areas the Women and Work Commission looked at was the careers information and guidance available to girls at school. The Government are determined to take action to address all causes of the pay gap highlighted in the Women and Work Commission report and will issue an action plan within six months.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the role that improved career advice for girls could play in closing the pay gap. [60383]

Meg Munn: We recognise that good quality careers advice is essential in allowing girls to make informed decisions regarding their career choices. The Women and Work Commission's final report highlights that, three years after graduating, women earn 15 per cent. less than their male counterparts.

The Government are committed, through initiatives such as the 'Computer Club for Girls', to encouraging girls to consider all types of career options available to them. Such initiatives work to reduce occupational segregation—a main factor influencing the gender pay gap.

The Women and Work Commission presented their final report to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 27 February. One of the areas they looked at was careers information, advice and guidance for girls. The Government are determined to take action to address all causes of the pay gap highlighted in the Women and Work Commission report and will issue an action plan within six months.

Flexible Working

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what measures the Government are taking to encourage businesses to provide more high-quality, high-paid flexible and part-time work at all levels, with particular reference to senior staff. [60378]

Meg Munn: The Government introduced, through the Employment Act 2002, a statutory duty on employers to consider seriously requests for flexible working from parents with children under six or disabled children under 18. The Government also published the Work and Families Bill in October 2005, which extends the right to request flexible working to carers of adults.

The Government encourage all types of flexible working across the work force by providing detailed guidance that promotes the benefits and shares best practice. The Business Link service is a crucial part of the Government's campaign to promote enterprise and to make the UK the best place to start and grow a business. Business Link provides practical support and advice for employers and its website provides information about the benefits of, and different types of flexible working, including job-sharing and part-time working.

The Acas online advice leaflet 'Flexible working' and their guide 'Changing patterns of work' aims to help employers and employees agree flexible working arrangements that provide benefits to both individuals and their organisations.

The Women and Work Commission have looked at and made recommendations on the availability of quality part-time work including that at senior levels. The Government are determined to take action to address all causes of the pay gap highlighted in the women and work commission report and will issue an action plan within six months.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what recent discussions she has had with trade unions about the role they can play in promoting flexible working. [60380]

Meg Munn: I have had a number of meetings with trade unions over the last year to discuss matters of interest, including flexible working. The Government work with a range of stakeholders, including the trade unions, to promote the benefits of flexible working.

Minimum Wage

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the effect of the national minimum wage on women. [60381]

Meg Munn: The national minimum wage has benefited around one million people each year since its introduction in 1999, and around two-thirds of those benefiting are low-paid women. The national minimum wage plays a part in narrowing the gender pay gap, as women are more likely to work in lower paid and often part-time jobs than men. The DTI estimates that two-thirds of the 1.3 million low-paid workers set to benefit from the October 2006 uprating will be women.

Women Workers (Public Services)

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps she is taking to encourage women who have left jobs in health and education to return to work in those services. [60379]

Meg Munn: The NHS has made great strides in recent years towards becoming a model employer. The NHS plan established the Improving Working Lives (IWL) standard, which states that every member of staff in the NHS is entitled to work for an organisation which provides a range of flexible working conditions and access to good quality, affordable child care. The increased provision of flexible working and child care has been an important incentive in encouraging former NHS staff back to work.

Flexible working arrangements for medical staff were encouraged through the national flexible career and returner schemes for doctors, which provided incentives to employers to establish more part-time posts. In addition, between 1999 and 2004, the Department of Health co-ordinated a national return to practice scheme for other health care professionals, including nurses and midwives. Returners were eligible for financial support and help with child care, travel and books. Over 18,500 staff returned as a result of this national programme. All returner schemes are now operated by NHS employers depending on local priorities.

Returning to Teach Courses run across England in eight out of nine Government office (GO) regions. Course providers are allocated a number of courses based on the GO's requirements in terms of teacher vacancies in that GO. Approximately 1,200 to 1,400 former teachers attend these 10-week long courses annually to update their skills, knowledge and to increase their confidence levels. 61 per cent. of course completers go on to return to teaching employment according to a recent February survey of 1,011 course completers. Course participants are supported with a £150 a week bursary, with additional support of up to £150 a week for each child or dependent incurring care costs.

In addition to course provision to support former teachers in returning to teach, there is a Return to Teach support service commissioned and managed by the Training and Development Agency for Schools, The Return to Teach service supports former teachers by:

1. Registering former teachers interested in returning to teaching employment
2. Distributing welcome packs to former teachers newly registered with the Return to Teach service (which includes details of a magazine targeted specifically at former teachers hoping to Return to Teach; details of courses in their area and lists of useful contacts)
3. A telephone support service with consultants who are themselves former teachers, to take inbound calling and to run outbound calling campaigns to target certain GO areas or teachers qualified in shortage subjects
4. The 'Return to Teaching' magazine is sent to everyone on the database termly to keep former teachers in touch with curriculum changes and school organisational changes such as the additional support provided by support staff, to encourage them to make a timely return to the profession

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

National Minimum Wage

14. **Mr. Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the national minimum wage since its introduction; and if he will make a statement. [60685]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Blaydon (Mr. Anderson), *Official Report*, column 395.

Manufacturing

15. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to assist manufacturing in the west midlands; and if he will make a statement. [60687]

Alun Michael: The Government are taking steps through the Manufacturing Strategy to encourage manufacturers in all regions to move to high value added production through the application of science and innovation, world-class practice and skills development.

Gas Prices

16. **Mr. Graham Stuart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on commercial gas prices. [60688]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government take the recent increases in energy prices very seriously and are very concerned about the impact on businesses. We are aware that this creates tough trading conditions, especially for energy intensive users. Prices have risen over the past year mainly as a result of increasing oil prices, leading to higher wholesale gas prices, and higher international coal prices. Recent periods of high gas prices during this winter reflect the supply-demand balance in the UK. We are leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to find solutions and to reduce the impact on those most affected.

Aerospace Industry

17. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to increase the competitiveness of the UK aerospace industry. [60689]

Alun Michael: In 2003, the Aerospace Innovation and Growth Team report set out the Government's vision for the UK aerospace industry. We aim to improve all aspects of the industry's productivity and competitiveness. We have drawn up and are implementing the National Aerospace Technology Strategy; we have set up the National Composites Network and supported it with investment of £30 million; and we are developing the sustainable aviation strategy.

China

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the most recent balance of trade with China is; and if he will make a statement. [60686]

Ian Pearson: In 2004 the UK's export of goods and services to China amounted to £3.4 billion; imports of goods and services amounted to £10.9 billion; giving a balance of trade in China's favour amounting to £7.4 billion.

UK exports to China are growing strongly. Chinese figures for the first 11 months of 2005 shows that UK exports grew by 15 per cent. higher than any of our major European competitors (Germany 1 per cent. Italy 9 per cent.) with the exception of France (16 per cent.). As China's economy develops, new opportunities are becoming available to UK business. Ensuring that UK business is best placed to take advantage of this is a key priority for the Government.

Many UK companies decide to invest in, rather than trade with, China. The UK is one of the largest investors in China (and the largest EU investor in China and Hong Kong combined) with a total of over 4,834 British-invested projects as of November 2005.

UK Trade and Investment is leading on the Chancellor's Asia Task Force initiative and working actively with its Chinese counterparts on a range of market access and trade and investment issues through the UK-China Joint Economic Trade Commission.

Communications Act

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have been *(a)* charged, *(b)* convicted, *(c)* fined and *(d)* cautioned under the Communications Act 2003; and what the average level of fine levied has been. [59141]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of people prosecuted, found guilty, fined and cautioned under the Communications Act 2003 for England and Wales, is shown in the table. The Communications Act 2003 provisions came into force in April 2004. Figures have also been included for TV licence evasion offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts. Information on charges is not collected centrally.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates court, found guilty at all courts fined and cautioned for offences relating to the Communications Act 2003 and the Wireless Telegraphy Acts, in England and Wales, 2004[1]

Offence Act	*Offence description*	*Cautioned*	*Prosecuted*	*Found Guilty*	*Fined*	*Average fine amount (£)*
Communications Act 2003	Offences in connection with information requirements	—	—	—	—	—
Communications Act 2003 S.125	Dishonestly obtaining electronic communications services	—	17	16	4	92
Communications Act 2003 S.126	Possession or supply of apparatus for contravening S.125	—	3	2	2	155
Communications Act 2003 S.127	Improper uses of public electronic communications network	—	214	143	31	145
Communications Act 2003 and Wireless Telegraphy Acts	Installing or using a television receiver without the appropriate licence and other summary offences	1	115,642	97,766	96,192	231

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Nil.

Source:

RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Cold Calling

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the consultation document Doorstep Selling and Cold Calling of July 2004, whether *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary legislation would be required to extend the statutory cooling-off period for consumers entering into a contract as a result of an unsolicited visit to the same length of time following a contract as a result of a solicited visit. [60813]

Mr. Sutcliffe: On the basis of our assessment of the financial and numerical significance of solicited visits compared with unsolicited visits which are covered by the directive on contracts negotiated away from business premises (85/577/EEC), we have concluded that this change would require primary legislation.

Equal Treatment Directive

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being made towards implementing EU directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment in goods and services; and when he plans to bring forward enabling legislation. [59368]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 currently meets many of the requirements of the EC gender directive on equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (2004/113/EC). Work to implement the remaining requirements of the directive is being carried out as part of the Discrimination Law Review (DLR). The decision on which legislative vehicle should be used to transpose the directive has not yet been taken. This decision will determine the timing of its implementation.

European Space Agency

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in encouraging the European Space Agency to review its procurement policy of fair return. [60690]

Barry Gardiner: Following UK representation ESA and the EU will carry out a review of options for governance and implementation mechanisms for future European space activities. Procurement policy will be included in the review. The review will feed into the European Space Policy which is expected to be finalised in 2007. The UK will continue to participate in the relevant forum to ensure that the review is carried out thoroughly.

Industrial Support

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding his Department has provided to support the *(a)* aerospace, *(b)* agricultural, *(c)* automotive, *(d)* biotechnology, *(e)* chemical, *(f)* construction, *(g)* research and development and *(h)* tourism industry in (i) the North East and (ii) the Tees Valley in each of the last five years. [59928]

Alun Michael: It should be noted that the agricultural and tourism industries are likely to receive funding from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) respectively and figures are not available in the precise format specified in the question. Government funding for ONE North East, the Regional Development Agency for the North East of England, for the last five years amounts to:

Financial year	*Funding (£ million)*
2001–02	158.2
2002–03	195.9
2003–04	222.6
2004–05	225.6
2005–06	243.9

Source:
ONE North East

ONE North East estimate that around 25 per cent. of its resources, or £262 million over the last 5 years, have been provided to support projects and initiatives in the Tees Valley sub-region, including resources devolved to the Tees Valley Partnership.

In addition, since April 2002 ONE North East has administered the Selective Finance for Investment in England (SFIE) and Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) schemes on behalf of DTI. Total spend on this scheme in the North East and Tees Valley sub-region is outlined in the following table:

£ million

Financial year	*Total spend*	*Tees Valley spend*
2002–03	11.900	0.945
2003–04	18.133	3.110
2004–05	19.532	5.120
2005–06	14.644	3.245

Source:
ONE North East

ONE North East also administers the DTI Grant for Research and Development (previously Smart) scheme to encourage SMEs to undertake science and technology research and development activities. Spend on this scheme is outlined in the following table:

£

Financial year	*Total spend*	*Tees Valley spend*
2001–02	455,880	52,238
2002–03	1,220,426	66,163
2003–04	1,467,588	16,750
2004–05	1,537,501	128,896
2005–06	1,229,675	123,923

Source:
ONE North East

The Department also provides funding through a wide number of schemes, initiatives and collaborative programmes of direct and indirect benefit to the North East and the Tees Valley, including the business sectors identified in the question. These include:

LINK and Technology Programme;

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships;

£630,000 allocated to the Biosystems Informatics Institute, Newcastle through the "Harnessing Genomics" programme in 2004;

A share of £5 million over a five year period (2002–07) to Newcastle's Life Knowledge Park (one of five Genetics Knowledge Parks, GKPs);

Committed funding of £7.2 million to ONE North East under its University Innovation Centre (UIC) programme in 2002 to fund the North East UIC in Nanotechnology—a consortium of the five regional universities (including Teesside) plus industrial partners;

Direct funding of £158,000 to a North East biotechnology company in 2003 by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC);

£115,000 to commercial suppliers in the North East through the awarding of contracts by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) since 2001;

Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF, jointly funded by DTI and DfES through HEFCE) has allocated £9.2 million (SRIF1, 2002–04) and 20.1m (SRIF2, 2004–06) towards capital and infrastructure projects in the North East's universities;

Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF, jointly funded by DTI and DfES through HEFCE) has allocated £13 million through HEIF1 (2002–04) and HEIF2 (2004–06) to the North East's universities for projects benefiting business and the community;

the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI), the centre of excellence located at the Wilton Centre near Redcar.

Junk Mail

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures his Department is taking to combat the distribution of fake competitions and chain letters via junk mail. [59755]

Barry Gardiner: Customers who receive material through the postal system which may represent a scam or fraud of some kind should be advised to report the activity to relevant bodies (for example local Trading Standards and/or the police) for investigation and any appropriate action.

Direct advertising mail is a legitimate method of marketing goods and services and we have no plans to take measures to prohibit or restrict such mail.

North West Regional Development Agency

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the companies in Cumbria which have received assistance from the North West Regional Development Agency since it was set up. [60328]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

NWDA Response

The NWDA has provided assistance to a large number of companies through various initiatives and through various outlets (Special Purpose Vehicles, Urban Regeneration Companies, large schemes and programmes such as Single Regeneration Budget). The following initiatives are operating or have operated in Cumbria since NWDA was set up in 1999.

Initiatives

Specific initiatives which NWDA has funded/contributed towards directly:

Barrow Building the Future
NW Farm Tourism Initiative
Planning Facilitation Service
Made in Cumbria
North West Fine Foods
North West Food Alliance
Distinctly Cumbrian
Market Towns Initiative
Regional Rural Recovery Plan (to tackle the immediate impact of Foot and Mouth Disease)
Redundant Building Grant/Rural Small Building Grant Scheme
Farming Horizons Programme
Cumbria Rural Regeneration Company
Cumbria Tourist Board
United Biscuits, Carlisle (in response to the Carlisle flood disaster in 2005)
Project Access

Inward Investment

Companies assisted by the Inward Investment Team in NWDA:

UCBSA
Kangol Headwear Europe
Maple Leaf Bakery
E2
The Shaw Group
Kimberley Clark Corporation
Mota Corporation
MWH Global
Fluor Government Group
Pechiney Aviatube Ltd

The following companies/businesses have been assisted through Selective Finance for Investment (SFI)/Regional Selective Assistance (RSA), which is administered by NWDA

Mitchell's Auction Co Ltd
Vertex Data Science Ltd
C N Group Ltd
Marl International Ltd
Alcan Packaging UK Ltd
Pechinery Aviatube Ltd
Pentagon Chemical Holdings Ltd
Diamould Ltd
Camtex Corporation Ltd
Barrow Travel Ltd
Coordination Group Publication Ltd
Maple Leaf Bakery Uk Limited
New West Port Corporation Ltd
Cumbrian Seafoods Ltd
Retail Variations
Iomart Internet Ltd
Bollman Headwear Europe Ltd
James Walker & Co Ltd
Oxley Developments Co Ltd
Orcina Cable Protection Ltd
Colour Gro Ltd
Tornado Wire
Alcan Packaging UK Limited
BAE SYSTEMS Marine Ltd
Subconsult
Full Colour Printers Ltd
Gravatom Engineering Ltd
Abacus (Colour Printers) Ltd
Kimberley Clark
Brockhill Enterprises Ltd
A1 Engineering Ltd

Performance House Ltd

Mike Miller Associates Ltd

Liberata UK Limited

Diamould Ltd

Ardington Fulfilment Ltd

A range of companies and businesses have been assisted by NWDA through Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) schemes.

Round 2: Heart of Barrow; Cumbria Credits.

Round 3: Allerdale (Salterbeck); Cumbria New Frontiers.

Round 4: Carlisle Raffles; Maryport.

Round 5: Barrow in Furness (Building Bridges); Cleator Moor Regeneration; Cumbria Rural Regeneration.

Round 6: Distinctly Cumbrian; South Whitehaven; West Cumbria; Workington Regeneration.

Post Boxes

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the Royal Mail's programme of re-instating collection tablets on post boxes is progressing; and how many tablets are outstanding. [60699]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Royal Mail Plc. The Chief Executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Post Office

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with Citibank International plc as providers of the Post Office card account on the ending of the contract for the account; and if he will make a statement. [58297]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

The Department for Work and Pensions has a contractual arrangement with Post Office Ltd. for the Post Office card account; we do not have a contract with Citibank.Citibank was appointed by Post Office Ltd. to assist them with the running of the Post Office card account. Any discussions between Post Office Ltd. and Citibank are matters for the companies.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of setting up the Post Office card account. [58328]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

Information on the setting up costs of the Post Office card account is a commercial matter for Post Office Limited.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been carried out by his Department on the likely impact on other shops in the area where there is an existing post office of the ending of the Post Office card account. [58867]

Barry Gardiner: The future levels of business at post offices across the network and any other neighbouring shops will depend on many factors including usage by the local community and the outcome of ongoing discussions between Post Office Ltd and Department for Work and Pensions on what accounts, other than the Post Office card account, will be available after 2010.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to respond to the Post Office's report on Innovative Ways of Providing Post Office Services in Rural Areas; and what assessment he has made of the merits of a hub and spoke structure in some parts of the rural network. [60590]

Barry Gardiner: The Post Office pilot report will be a useful contribution to the Government's considerations of the future shape of the post office network. As the report is a factual account of the findings of the trials of new ways of delivering postal services, there are no plans to formally respond. We are considering the findings and will not announce any longer-term decision until all stakeholders have had time to review and debate the results of these trials.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices were in operation in each London constituency in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [60549]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd., Alan Cook, the Managing Director has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Postcode Charges

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to introduce legislation to exempt local authorities from the royalty payment levied by the Royal Mail for use of postcodes. [60860]

Barry Gardiner: The Government have no plans to introduce any legislation along the suggested lines. Statutory obligations relating to the management of Royal Mail's "Postcode Address File" are defined under Section 116 of the Postal Services Act 2000, which states that the File can be made "available to any person who wishes to use it on such terms as are reasonable". This obligation is specifically governed under Condition 20 of Royal Mail's licence issued by Postcomm which states that the company shall "furnish a copy of the File to any person who may request it upon payment of a reasonable charge".

The management of the "Postcode Address File" is currently the subject of a Postcomm consultation due to end on 3 May 2006. Government would encourage any interested party to use this opportunity to make their views known on the management of the PAF.

Royal Family

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his Answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2049W, on the Royal Family, what costs arising from HRH the Duke of York's visit to the Middle East fell on his Department; and how much of these costs were *(a)* travel costs, *(b)* accommodation costs and *(c)* other costs. [59754]

Ian Pearson: This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Royal Mail Performance (London)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with Royal Mail on performance in delivery of mail in London; and if he will make a statement. [60548]

Barry Gardiner: DTI Ministers and officials meet with representatives from Royal Mail on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of issues, including delivery performance issues.

We have received assurances from Allan Leighton and Adam Crozier that the Board's top priority remains to improve Royal Mail's quality of service. This is reflected in the latest performance figures.

Between October and early December 2005 94 per cent. of first class mail was delivered the next day, against a target of 93 per cent. Second class post beat its 98.9 per cent. target by 0.4 per cent. over the same three month period.

Telephone Preference Service Rules

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the reasons were for his decision to increase the maximum fine that is able to be imposed under breaches of telephone preference service rules. [60636]

Alun Michael: The increased penalty relates to persistent misuse of electronic communications networks or electronic communications services and is directed particularly at silent calls and does not concern breaches of the telephone preference service rules, which are dealt with by the Information Commissioner's Office. Last summer the Office of Communications (Ofcom) requested DTI to consider raising the maximum penalty, which could be levied by Ofcom from £5,000 to £50,000 against those that make nuisance silent calls, in view of mounting public and parliamentary concern. It was felt that the current maximum penalty was not sufficient for the level of consumer harm and worry that silent calls caused and that it was not a real sanction or deterrent. Ofcom proposed that the maximum penalty should be increased to £50,000. I agreed with Ofcom's proposal and launched a consultation on 31 October 2005, which closed on 24 January 2006. In response to the consultation there was overwhelming support for raising the maximum penalty and on 1 March 2006 I announced our intention to increase the maximum penalty to £50,000.

Trading Standards Investigations

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many trading standards investigations were carried out in each London borough in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [60554]

Mr. Sutcliffe: DTI does not collect specific information on the number of investigations undertaken by trading standards departments. However as part of the National Performance Framework for trading standards, we do ask that they tell us how many complaints from consumers they have dealt with and how many businesses were either inspected or given advice.

The following data indicates trading standards activity across the 32 London boroughs during 2004–05—the latest year for which data is available.

	Number of businesses visited or given advice	*Number of Consumer complaints responded to*
Corporation of London	[1]—	[1]—
Inner London		
Camden	300	1,200
Greenwich	112	1,114
Hackney	[1]—	[1]—
Hammersmith and Fulham	194	1,067
Islington	283	1,491
Kensington and Chelsea	137	1,371
Lambeth	[1]—	[1]—
Lewisham	820	2,224
Southwark	n/a	3,000
Tower Hamlets	61	3,001
Wandsworth	620	2,449
Westminster	1,046	3,026
Outer London		
Barking and Dagenham	[1]—	[1]—
Barnet	[1]—	[1]—
Bexley	124	3,673
Brent and Harrow	3,480	4,726
Bromley	80	5,026
Croydon	1,448	2,008
Ealing	148	1,363
Enfield	960	3,383
Haringey	183	2,137
Havering	1,254	402
Hillingdon	506	3,480
Hounslow	[1]—	[1]—
Kingston-upon-Thames	822	792
Merton	366	1,681
Newham	[1]—	[1]—

	Number of businesses visited or given advice	*Number of Consumer complaints responded to*
Redbridge	[1]—	[1]—
Richmond-upon-Thames	902	3,067
Sutton	346	3,414
Waltham Forest	1,114	2,434

[1] No data available

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Air Passenger Duty

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what international development initiatives the revenue derived from the air passenger duty will fund. [60315]

Hilary Benn: The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a statement to the House on 2 March 2006, in which he stated that the UK will hypothecate part of its Air Passenger Duty to provide a long-term stream of finance to the International Finance Facility and the International Finance Facility for Immunisation.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether development aid funded from air passenger duty will be additional to existing overseas development aid spending commitments. [60316]

Hilary Benn: The Chancellor told the House on 2 March 2006, that the UK will be using part of its existing Air Passenger Duty to fund the International Finance Facility for Immunisation and the International Finance Facility (IFF). The aim of the IFF is to frontload resources within the aid commitments announced by donors at Monterrey, Gleneagles and elsewhere, including the UK plans for public spending on aid announced by the Chancellor in the Spending Review 2004.

The payments we make into these facilities would not be additional to existing overseas development aid commitments. However, with the substantial extra funds that the IFF could deliver to poor countries, the UK could reach the equivalent of the 0.7 per cent. Overseas Development Assistance/Gross National Income (ODA-GNI) target as early as 2008–09, several years earlier than without the IFF.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether international development aid to be funded from hypothecated air passenger duty will be subject to economic policy conditions. [60317]

Hilary Benn: The UK will hypothecate part of its Air Passenger Duty to provide a long-term stream of finance to the International Finance Facility (IFF) and its pilot the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm).

The IFF is an innovative financing instrument which will disburse money through existing development agencies. In the case of the IFFIm, the money generated is used to fund the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI). The aim of the IFF is to provide an immediate increase in long-term predictable finance.

Once an IFF-funded programme has been approved, the IFF will not impose any conditionality in addition to that already used by the disbursement agency. However, there is a high-level financing condition for the IFF which means that no new programmes will be approved in a country while it is in protracted arrears with the IMF.

Ethiopia

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost was of the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia; what assessment he has made of its effectiveness; and if he will make a statement. [58037]

Hilary Benn: The current cost of the Productive Safety Nets Programme, which is one component of the Ethiopian Government's national food security programme, is £170 million per annum. DFID will contribute £30 million in this financial year (2005–06). The remainder will be provided by a consortium of other donors, including the World Bank and the European Commission. The Ethiopian Government contributes US $250 million to the other components of the national food security programme, but not to the Productive Safety Nets Programme.

The Productive Safety Nets Programme is subject to regular reviews by donors and by the Government of Ethiopia. These reviews have demonstrated that the programme has delivered either cash or food to approximately 4.9 million targeted beneficiaries so far, and is beginning to show positive impacts on the livelihoods of very poor people.

International Women's Day

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received regarding International Women's Day. [58824]

Hilary Benn: I have not received any representations specifically on the issue of International Women's Day. However, to mark this important occasion, DFID held a seminar on the theme of "Women Defining Success" for staff in its offices in London and Glasgow.

International Women's Day also saw the launch of the UK National Action Plan on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security. DFID is one of the three Government Departments responsible for this action plan.

Oil Extraction

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many development projects supporting oil extraction his Department funded in the last 12 months; how much was allocated to each project; where each was located; and what percentage of total UK aid the funding represented. [60254]

Mr. Thomas: None.

Philippines

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of work undertaken by non-governmental organisations to combat child domestic work and trafficking of children in the Philippines; and whether his Department has funded such work. [60486]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has recently assessed a proposal from the International Children's Trust (ICT) for a programme with child domestic workers in the Philippines. Based on our assessment, we have agreed to provide approximately £320,000 to support the Trust's proposal. The ICT will work through a local partner, the Visayan Forum Foundation, where our support will meet the cost of operations for two years from April 2006. This is the first activity we have financed in the Philippines that will address this important issue and we will monitor and review the impact of the programme carefully.

Resource Extraction Projects

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the mineral and natural resource extraction projects in developing countries. [53850]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's primary involvement with mineral and natural resource extraction projects in developing countries is an indirect one, as a 'shareholder' in multilateral financial institutions, such as the World Bank group and the Regional Development Banks, which invest in projects in this sector. However, DFID monitors developments in the minerals and natural resources sector as part of a commitment to sustainable development and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

DFID's main focus is on the general principles adopted in the environmental and social policies and procedures of the multilateral banks because these provide the framework within which the environmental and social impacts of specific projects are managed 'on the ground'. For example, DFID has been actively engaged in the Extractive Industries Review, which assessed the compatibility of World Bank's investments in the extractive sector with their missions of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

More recently, DFID has also contributed to the International Finance Corporation's review of its environmental and social safeguards policies and procedures. These safeguards are a key tool to ensure the prudent management of the exploitation of natural resources in developing countries.

DFID also provides support to the newly established Inter-Governmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development. The primary role of this Forum is to assist developing countries to manage their mineral wealth as a key component in their development strategies.

Sierra Leone

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the work of the Sierra Leonean Anti-Corruption Commission. [57007]

Hilary Benn: The Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has been working to combat corruption since its creation in 2000. The work of the ACC covers all aspects of corruption—from prevention and community education to carrying out investigations and forwarding these for prosecution.

UK Support to the ACC:

Supporting anti-corruption efforts is one of the UK's top priorities in Sierra Leone. The UK has been supporting the ACC since its inception through the provision of funding and technical assistance to enhance the capacity and efficiency of the ACC. To date, the UK has provided just over £4 million to the ACC.

Investigations and Prosecutions:

A total of 551 cases have been investigated by the ACC from July 2000 to December 2005. Of these, 51 cases have been charged to court (37 to the High Court and 14 to the magistrates court), resulting in 21 convictions (16 High Court and 5 magistrates court).

Prevention and Community Education:

A National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NAGS) was launched by President Kabbah in February 2005. Following this, community education campaigns were launched throughout Sierra Leone to raise awareness on the strategy. Separate anti-corruption plans have been developed for key ministries where potential for corruption is highest.

Sudan

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Darfur. [57004]

Hilary Benn: I visited Sudan 20–22 February 2006. I spent a day in El Fasher, North Darfur where I met with the Acting Governor (Wali) of the state and the new AMIS Force Commander, General Ihekire. I also visited two Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps on the outskirts of El Fasher where I met with IDPs and non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives. In Khartoum, I met with Vice Presidents Taha and Kiir, Foreign Minister Lam Akol, representatives of the AU, the UN Special Representative Jan Pronk as well as UN Agency and non-governmental organisation (NGO) heads.

The humanitarian situation in Darfur has stabilised and is much better than in 2004 largely due to the enormous international effort. Huge problems remain, however, with 1.8 million people still in camps unable to go home and 3.4 million people dependent on humanitarian aid. This progress has, however, to be set against a serious deterioration in security. In addition to the clashes between rebels and Government forces and tension along the border with Chad, increasing lawlessness and banditry is becoming a major concern. The insecurity is severely hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance, leaving many people intensely vulnerable.

In my meetings with Government representatives, I reinforced the message delivered by the Foreign Secretary at the Abuja talks on 14 February, namely that the lack of progress on Darfur is unacceptable. The parties to the Abuja peace talks must negotiate urgently and in good faith. Both sides need to show by their actions on the ground that they are serious about a peace deal; both must co-operate with, and neither hinder nor threaten, AMIS and the international community in Darfur; and all must end the climate of impunity.

I discussed the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). The AU have done a good job in deterring violence in the region in very difficult circumstances, but the AU force was not designed or configured for long-term operation. We need to strengthen the international operation in Darfur, which means handing over from the AU to a bigger UN force with a stronger mandate. I welcome the decision taken by the AU Peace and Security Committee on 10 March, to support, in principle, transition to a UN force in Darfur. The new AMIS Force Commander briefed me on the current unpredictable security situation and his plans for addressing the challenges facing AMIS. To help ensure AMIS maintains its effectiveness, I announced a further £20 million in UK support to the mission.

I also took the opportunity to announce a £40 million contribution to the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), a pioneering multi-donor fund, administered by the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator. This will help enable the UN to react more quickly and more flexibly to both identified and unforeseen needs, not only in Darfur but across all of Sudan.

Sustainable Development

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking to promote sustainable development in the developing world towards the reduction of global greenhouse gases; and if he will make a statement. [60454]

Mr. Thomas: DFID takes the issue of climate change very seriously. We are working with others, in particular the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, to increase investment in low carbon energy, particularly in developing countries. This is in line with the Gleneagles Plan of Action for Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development, which the G8 signed up to in July 2005. This included commitments to encourage increased investment in cleaner and more efficient energy technologies.

Specifically, the World Bank and Regional Development Banks are developing the Energy Investment Framework to address obstacles to investment in low carbon development and encourage both public and private sectors to invest more in clean energy in developing countries. The Framework will also look to improve the effectiveness of existing strategies in developing world countries, for example, by integrating climate change into transport sector strategies.

In addition to this, the Government have been supporting EU efforts to promote low carbon energy in developing countries. At the EU-India Summit in September 2005, both parties agreed to launch an EU-India Initiative on Clean Development and Climate Change. One aim of the Initiative will be to increase funding and promote public-private partnerships for research and development of cleaner technologies. It will also look to reduce the price gap between "cleaner" and "less efficient" technologies.

Similarly, an EU-China Partnership was signed in September 2005. As a focal part of this, the UK is supporting a new initiative on near-Zero Emissions Coal with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) to address the challenge of tackling increasing greenhouse gas emissions from the use of coal in China. The aim is to bring forward the time when new Chinese coal plants are built with CCS. Near-Zero Emissions Coal and large-scale deployment of CCS in China could halve their projected emissions by 2030. This will be a significant achievement as on current levels China is set to overtake the United States as the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the next 20 years.

Uganda

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on recent discussions with the Government of Uganda on *(a)* the humanitarian situation and *(b)* its support for a negotiated end to the conflict in the north of the country. [60493]

Hilary Benn: We have regular discussions with the Government of Uganda on the humanitarian situation in the north and efforts to end the conflict, both at ministerial and official level.

Most recently, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, attended a ministerial meeting in Geneva on 20 March to discuss how best to take forward international community efforts to address the conflict and its humanitarian consequences. At the meeting high-level delegations from the UK, US, Netherlands, Norway, United Nation agencies and the Government of Uganda discussed a range of proposals for better political involvement and strengthening the co-ordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance on the ground. The next step will be detailed follow up at official level in Kampala over the next few weeks.

We have been one of the largest humanitarian donors in Uganda over the last five years and this year we have provided over £20 million in humanitarian assistance. We have also provided financial support for conflict resolution and mediation. We have a major commitment to help end the conflict and rebuild the shattered communities of northern Uganda.

World Food Programme

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what criteria he uses to assess whether the UK Government contribute to the World Food Programme's disaster derivative insurance scheme; [60428]

(2) what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had on contributing to the World Food Programme's disaster derivative insurance scheme; [60429]

(3) what his assessment is of the World Food Programme's decision to buy natural disaster insurance cover in case of drought in Ethiopia. [60430]

Mr. Thomas: The World Food Programme's (WFP) pilot drought insurance project was launched in Ethiopia earlier this year, for one year. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not had discussions with the WFP on this issue, but DFID officials have followed the project's evolution closely and, with other WFP members, have provided detailed feedback in the WFP executive board meetings and privately to the secretariat. The Government are not contributing to this pilot, which has received the funding it needs from other sources. The key criterion we will use in deciding whether or not to contribute to any future schemes will be the extent to which we believe they can ensure timely and reliable delivery of assistance to those who need it most.

The current pilot in Ethiopia is designed to benefit farmers whose livelihoods are threatened by drought of the severity experienced on average once every 10 years in Ethiopia. It does not target all those whose lives are threatened by insufficient food. They would depend on other mechanisms, including emergency food aid operations and the existing Productive Safety Nets Programme in Ethiopia; DFID contributes resources to both.

Over the past 15 months, the UK Government have proposed a number of reforms aimed at making the humanitarian system more effective. These include investing 10 per cent. of emergency response funds in measures to prevent, or reduce the impact of, future disasters, and reforming and expanding the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, to enable the UN to launch an immediate response wherever it is needed. DFID will continue to monitor the WFP's scheme and other developments in the area of disaster insurance.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a de minimis size is set for *(a)* a business property and *(b)* a piece of permanent stationary business equipment to be liable for business rates. [59125]

Mr. Woolas: There is no minimum size below which a hereditament is not liable for business rates. However, size may in certain very particular circumstances specified in the Valuation for Rating (Plant and Machinery) (England) Regulations 2000 be one factor in determining whether a piece of equipment is rateable.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the business rate liability is for a *(a)* pico cell, *(b)* micro cell and *(c)* macro cell mobile phone mast. [60125]

Mr. Woolas: The liability for business rates of any hereditament is calculated by multiplying its rateable value by the appropriate multiplier and applying any applicable reliefs. The rateable value, determined by the valuation officer, of hereditaments, which includes mobile phone mast installations, is a professional view of the annual rent of the individual hereditament established in accordance with the provisions of schedule 6 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988, at a set date—1 April 2003 for the current 2005 rating lists. The rateable value for these types of mobile phone masts would depend on, and be reflective of, rental evidence from the locality in which they are sited.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for comprehensive performance assessment. [60194]

Mr. Woolas: It is anticipated that the current framework for single tier and county council comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) will be in place until 2008. The Audit Commission has recently consulted on its approach to the assessment of district councils during the same period, and is due to confirm its approach shortly.

No decisions on the future of CPA beyond 2008 have yet been made.

Government Offices for the Regions

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of Government offices for the regions staff are *(a)* male and *(b)* female. [60022]

Jim Fitzpatrick: As of 17 March 2006 the Government offices for the regions staff in post is made up of 53.7 per cent. female and 46.3 per cent. male staff.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of Government offices for the regions staff are in each ethnic group. [60023]

Jim Fitzpatrick: As of the 17 March 2006 the proportion of staff in each ethnic group for the Government offices for the regions is illustrated in the following table;

Ethnicity	*Percentage*
Bangladeshi	0.29
Indian	2.18
Pakistani	0.61
Any other Asian background	0.5
African	0.86
Caribbean	1.72
Any other black background	0.14
Any Chinese background	0.18
Asian and white	0
Black African and white	0
Black Caribbean and white	0
Any other mixed ethnic background	0
White background	77.48
Any other ethnic background	0.86
Non-respondents	15.18
Total	100

Local Authority Managers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of managers in local authorities are *(a)* from ethnic minority backgrounds and *(b)* female. [59501]

Mr. Woolas: The most recent best value performance indicators show that in 2004–05 29.5 per cent. of the top earners (top 5 per cent.) in English local authorities were women, and 2.9 per cent. were from black and minority ethnic communities.

Local Government Pensions

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of the Local Government Pension Scheme in 2006–07. [60119]

Mr. Woolas: I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles) on 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1750W.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the legislative timetable is for the abolition of the 85 year rule and the associated reform of the Local Government Pension Scheme. [60120]

Mr. Woolas: A statement will be made shortly.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what authority the trustees of the local government pension scheme were permitted to allow employees to reduce their contributions to the local government pension scheme from 1988 onwards. [60284]

Mr. Woolas: The regulations governing the local government pension scheme in England and Wales were amended in March 1990 to require that local government pension funds should be able to meet 75 per cent. of their existing and prospective viabilities. This provision was subsequently amended in March 1993 when the original requirement, that funds should at all times be solvent, was reinstated. That requirement still applies.

The local government pension scheme has no trustees. Being a public service pension scheme, statutory responsibility for its stewardship at local authority level rests with the elected members of the appropriate authority.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the deficits were, expressed as a percentage of total liabilities, of funds within the Local Government Pension Scheme following the 2004 valuation. [60286]

Mr. Woolas: As at 31 March 2004, the 89 Local Government Pension Scheme funds in England and Wales had assets overall covering 74 per cent. of their liabilities.

Local Government Restructuring

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2240W, on local government restructuring, if he will list *(a)* each council that was represented at the Shrewsbury event and *(b)* the councils represented at each of the six other meetings. [59170]

Mr. Woolas: Officers and members of the county and district councils of Shropshire attended the event held in Shrewsbury on 7 February, in addition to those from Telford and Wrekin, Worcestershire County, Worcester City, Wychavon district and Herefordshire councils.

An invitation to attend a meeting with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister officials to discuss governance and structures was extended to the chief executives of all county, district and unitary (other than London borough and metropolitan district) councils. A total of eight meetings have now been held. A list of those councils that indicated their intention of attending a meeting has been sent to the hon. Member. A record of actual attendance at each meeting is not held.

Mobile Phones

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local authorities on the level of mobile phone coverage which should be available in advance of new housing developments being approved. [59160]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Planning policy note 8: 'Telecoms' states

> "In considering planning applications for other forms of development, planning authorities will wish to consider telecommunications issues. They should encourage prospective developers of new housing, office and industrial estates to consider with all relevant telecommunications operators how the telecommunications needs of the occupiers will be met."

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Office in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Office set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52858]

Mr. Woolas: On the most recent evidence the ODPM central efficiency programme achieved some £204 million efficiency gains in 2004–05. These count towards our agreed efficiency target.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 587W, on the Valuation Office Agency, in what image format the digital images of domestic properties are stored. [46996]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The Valuation Office Agency stores digital images in JPEG (JFIF compliant) format.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Valuation Office Agency spent on *(a)* video cameras, *(b)* camcorders and *(c)* related electronic equipment in the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such cameras were purchased in each year. [47149]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Details of expenditure by the Valuation Office Agency on *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)*, in the last five years, are shown in the following table. One camcorder and related electronic equipment, including an editing workstation and video recorder/player, was purchased to support effective internal communications via the Agency's intranet—it is neither available to, nor used by, staff for any other purpose.

£

	(a) Video cameras	(b) Camcorders	(c) Related electronic equipment
2001–02	0	0	0
2002–03	0	0	0
2003–04	0	0	0
2004–05	0	[1]1653.00	5030.00
2005–06	0	0	0

[1] Quantity = one.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 215W, on the Valuation Office Agency, if he will place in the Library a copy of the information and training guidance provided to Agency staff. [48158]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1038W. A copy of what the Valuation Office Agency makes permanently available to its staff, on the personal safety of inspectors conducting a valuation of a property, was included in the information placed in the Library.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2006 to the hon. Member for Meriden, *Official Report*, column 1699W, on the Valuation Office Agency, how many properties the Agency inspected in England in the last year for which figures are available for *(a)* council tax and *(b)* business rate purposes. [59171]

Mr. Woolas: The number of properties the Valuation Office Agency inspected for *(a)* council tax and *(b)* business rates purposes is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Ordnance Survey has provided the Valuation Office Agency with maps on *(a)* a 1:500 and *(b)* 1:1250 scale in the last five years. [59120]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Ordnance Survey has not provided the Valuation Office Agency with any maps at 1:500 scale. Ordnance Survey has provided the Valuation Office Agency with 1:1250 maps for all areas of GB mapped at that scale.

Waste Disposal Sites

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines the EU has issued on the siting of *(a)* landfill sites and *(b)* sites dealing with hazardous waste close to housing; and if he will make a statement. [59891]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

We are not aware of any such guidelines. Article 4 of the waste framework directive (75/442/EEC as amended) requires member states to take measures to ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health and without using processes or methods which could harm the environment.

"Your Say" Campaigns

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total public expenditure was on the "Your Say" regional assembly publicity campaigns in *(a)* the North East, *(b)* North West and *(c)* Yorkshire and Humberside. [60098]

Mr. Woolas: The total sum spent on the "Your Say" information campaign across all three regions was £3.24 million.

The breakdown was as follows:

	£ million
North East	1.22
North West	1.07
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.95

DEFENCE

Antenna Test Facilities

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Department has for antenna test and measurement facilities at Pershore. [44167]

Mr. Ingram: As part of its site rationalisation programme, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory is planning to move its antenna test and measurement facility at Pershore to either Porton Down or Fort Halstead.

A final decision is dependent on identifying a suitable location on one of the sites. This decision will be influenced by both the size of the facility and the suitability of electrical environment.

Defence Export Services Organisation

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the operating costs of the Defence Export Services Organisation were in the last three financial years; and what the *(a)* expenditure and *(b)* receipts of the organisation were in each year. [60508]

Mr. Ingram: Operating costs for the last three financial years are as follows.

£ Million

Financial year	Expenditure	Receipts	Net operating costs
2003–04	58.348	-42.203	16.145
2004–05	59.960	-43.038	16.922
2005–06[1]	51.6	-38.0	13.6

[1] The figure for 2005–06 is a forecast.

The net operating costs are offset by benefits to the defence budget arising from
DESO activities.

Defence Intelligence and Security Centre

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many staff are employed by the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre; and what its net operating cost was in the last year for which figures are available; [60925]

(2) what the budget of the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) is for 2005–06; and how many persons are employed within the DIS. [60926]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Intelligence Staff budget for 2005–06 is £269.2 million net. It employs some 4,700 staff. The Defence Intelligence and Security Centre is a part of the Defence Intelligence Staff. Its staffing level and net operating cost for 2004–05 was published in the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre Annual Report in July 2005. A copy is available in the House of Commons Library.

Discharged Personnel (Social Housing)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the circumstances under which a member of the armed forces will be considered to have local connections for the purposes of obtaining social housing on discharge. [56370]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* There have been no meetings between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and the Deputy Prime Minister to discuss the issue of service personnel having a local connection for the purposes of obtaining social housing. Officials of the two Departments have discussed housing issues generally in relation to service personnel.

NATO and EU (Funding)

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the level of UK funding to *(a)* NATO and *(b)* defence policy and activities of the European Union has been since 1997. [57467]

Mr. Ingram: The UK's contribution to NATO's three common funded budgets (the Military Budget, the NATO Security and Investment Programme and the Civil Budget) since 1997–98 is as follows.

	£ million
1997–98	123.072
1998–99	117.840
1999–2000	123.968
2000–01	118.585
2001–02	126.616
2002–03	125.850
2003–04	104.433
2004–05	134.947

There is no common budget for the defence activities of the EU; instead, commonly funded costs incurred by specific military operations and exercises are apportioned to Member States. The first such operation was launched in 2003. The UK's share of these costs has been as follows.

	£ million
2003–04	0.742
2004–05	9.319

In addition, the UK has contributed the following to the budget of the European Defence Agency since its launch in July 2004.

	£ million
2004–05	1.047
2004–05	2.369

Hooding

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1535W, on hooding, (1) when officials first became aware that the order in question was no longer being adhered to; [59673]

(2) what the grades were of the officials concerned. [59674]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence officials of a variety of grades were aware of the General Officer Commanding's Order banning hooding in April 2003. Officials became aware that the order in question was no longer being adhered to in September 2003.

QinetiQ

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of defence research contracts by *(a)* number and *(b)* value his Department has awarded to (i) QinetiQ and the (ii) Defence Evaluation and Research Agency in each year since 2000; and what proportion of those contracts were passed on to third parties. [44152]

John Reid: In financial year 2001–02 the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency was split into two organisations: the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) staying as a Trading Fund within the Ministry of Defence, and QinetiQ becoming a private company. The value of research work placed within MOD (intramural) and outside of MOD (extramural) is published in the annual National Statistics publication "UK Defence Statistics" (Chapter 1.7 in the 2005 edition). A copy of this is held in the Library of the House.

It is not meaningful to talk in terms of number of contracts, as the MOD has a single formal enabling contract with QinetiQ and specific tasks are normally awarded against that contract.

The proportion of research work placed to different suppliers is outlined in the "Defence Industrial Strategy" (section A5.23), a copy of which is held in the Library of the House.

Data on the proportion of contracts passed by QinetiQ to a third party are not held centrally and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the flotation of QinetiQ on *(a)* site improvements at Fort Halstead and *(b)* the transfer of Defence Science and Technology Laboratory staff from Malvern to Fort Halstead. [44166]

Mr. Touhig: The flotation of QinetiQ will have no impact on either the relocation of staff from Malvern to Fort Halstead or the planned site improvements. The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory is the occupying authority and will continue to manage the estate improvements under the terms of the long head lease.

RAF Cosford (Museum)

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to expand the RAF museum at Cosford. [50861]

Mr. Touhig: As the RAF museum is a non-departmental public body, decisions on its future plans are a matter for the board of trustees and the senior management team.

The RAF museum at Cosford is currently expanding to house an exhibition entitled 'Divided World—Connected World' about the cold war. The Ministry of Defence provided £1 million towards the cost of this project, and completion is expected in late 2006.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59289]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence does not use any single definition of a small firm with terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (Small and Medium sized Enterprise) being used interchangeably. In reporting data about business placed with SMEs we define an SME as a firm employing under 250 people.

Spitfire (70th Anniversary)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to commemorate the forthcoming 70th anniversary of the launch of the Spitfire. [59832]

Mr. Touhig: Yes. The RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) Spitfire plans to participate, with other (non-RAF) Spitfire owners at three 70th anniversary themed events:

RAF Waddington on 1–2 July 2006

Dunsfold on 27 August 2006

Duxford on 2–3 September 2006

The BBMF website and 2006 brochure also have articles commemorating the 70th anniversary.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Child Sex Abuse

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1230–1231W, on child sex abuse, when a decision will be made on whether to move to the new database under consideration; what factors will be taken into account when deciding whether to move to a new database; how child sex abuse allegations will be tracked until a decision is made; and how the Police Service of Northern Ireland will collate clusters of allegations around particular individuals until a decision is made. [58277]

Mr. Woodward: In addition to the three databases I referred to in my answer to the hon. Gentleman of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1230–1231W, which already provide effective monitoring of sex offenders, the PSNI is monitoring the development of a system of tracking vulnerable children and case management for CARE Teams. This is being progressed by the UK's Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO), and the timing of its introduction is outside PSNI control. In the interim PSNI is considering introducing a system called CATS—Case Administration and Tracking System, (a stand-alone computerised system developed by Capital One Bank), which is being used by approximately 13 other UK police forces. This system is still under evaluation.

Co-ownership Schemes

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure that the co-ownership scheme that applies to first time house buyers has a maximum house valuation that is uniform across Northern Ireland. [59523]

Mr. Hanson: The value limits which apply to the co-ownership scheme are linked to average house prices in the various district council areas thus ensuring that the scheme can react to price variations across Northern Ireland. The introduction of a uniform price limit for the whole of Northern Ireland would disadvantage those wishing to purchase homes in district council areas where house prices are above average.

Data Sharing

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the extent is of data sharing on individuals between Government Departments and agencies in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. [57721]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Office and the 11 NI Departments and their agencies within Northern Ireland share information with the Republic of Ireland. The nature of the information shared is largely on a case-by-case basis and covers a number of areas which I summarise as follows:

Driver record information relating to exchanges of NI driving licences in Ireland to local authorities in Ireland under the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981.

Information relating to Digital Tachograph cards.

EC regulations concerning the operation of vehicles, driver directives and the carriage of goods.

Information in relation to investigations under the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste.

Planning applications for waste management.

Information on jointly funded cross-border grants programmes such as Peace and Interreg.

Applicant, vessel and operation details on the allocation and management of Seed Mussel stocks, including individual holding licensed sites with the Seed Mussel Allocation Committee (SMAC).

Information in certain circumstances for the purposes of calculating social security benefit entitlement and the identification of benefit fraud.

Information with the Republic of Ireland for the purposes of aiding enforcement and prosecution action in either or both jurisdictions in respect of illegal manufacturing, sale or supply of medical products.

Occasionally as part of cross-border investigations, DNA profiles for the purpose of the detection of crime.

Early Release Scheme

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether prisoners who participated in the early release scheme in 1998 were given financial assistance or incentive from the public purse *(a)* at the time of and *(b)* subsequent to their release. [58065]

Mr. Woodward: At their time of release, prisoners were given a discharge grant in line with that given to all persons released from prison. There was no special provision for early release prisoners. Early release prisoners were also able to claim state benefits from their date of release.

In addition, funding was made available to ex-prisoner groups by various Northern Ireland departments and the Northern Ireland Office. This included Peace and Gap funding.

Education (Employees)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees there are in the *(a)* maintained, *(b)* controlled, *(c)* integrated and *(d)* Irish language sectors of education in Northern Ireland. [57972]

Angela E. Smith: The number of employees, including both teaching and non-teaching staff is as follows:

Education sector	*Employees*
Maintained	17,492
Controlled	20,950
Integrated	2,153
Irish Language	119

Fire Services (Hoax Calls)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hoax callouts of fire service personnel there were in Northern Ireland in 2005. [60834]

Mr. Woodward: The number of hoax calls responded to by the Northern Ireland fire and rescue service in 2005 was 1,358.

Omagh Bombing

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has commissioned a report on the 1998 Omagh bombing; and if he will make a statement. [59896]

Mr. Woodward: When the Prime Minister met the families of the Omagh Bombing victims in November last year, he assured them that the investigation into the atrocity was very much ongoing. This is still the case and the Government remain committed to ensuring that the truth is established.

Our priority is that those responsible should be brought to justice, and we must ensure that energy is applied to pursuing these criminal investigations.

The hon. Member will be aware that Sean Gerard Hoey was charged with the 29 murders on 4 May 2005. The case is expected to come to trial in September 2006.

While the Government do not rule in or out the possibility of a public inquiry, we should wait and see what the trials produce first.

Prison Service (Expenditure)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average daily sum spent by the Prison Service in Northern Ireland on feeding *(a)* adult prisoners and *(b)* young offenders was in the last year for which figures are available. [58135]

Mr. Woodward: The average daily sum spent during 2004–05 by the Northern Ireland Prison Service on feeding *(a)* adult prisoners was £2.43 and *(b)* young offenders was £2.21.

Private Rented Accommodation

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average rental cost of two bed accommodation in Northern Ireland's private sector was in each of the last five years. [59948]

Mr. Hanson: The only information available is the average rental cost of two bedroom accommodation in Northern Ireland for the period 2002–03–2005–06, based on private sector housing benefit payments, as follows:

Average rental cost per two bedroom accommodation (per week)

Financial year	*£*
2002–03	70.71
2003–04	73.54
2004–05	77.09
2005–06	80.32

PRIME MINISTER

Downing Street (Events)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister (1) on how many occasions since 1 May 2005, 10 Downing Street has been made available for Labour Party events; and what income has been derived from such use; [59412]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 17 March 2006 to Question 59525, on Downing Street events, how many political events on behalf of the Labour Party he hosted in 2005; and what income was derived from those events for public funds. [60922]

The Prime Minister: As was the practice under previous administrations and in accordance with the Ministerial Code (4.2), I have hosted a number of political events at Downing Street. The costs of which were met by the Labour Party.

Asda

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Prime Minister on what dates meetings have taken place between officials in Number 10 Downing Street and representatives of Asda, including Asda's parent company Wal-Mart, in the last 12 months; and if he will list the participants. [59920]

The Prime Minister: My officials and I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals on a wide range of subjects. Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Audio Recorded Conversations

Harry Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has audio recorded conversations in his role as Prime Minister; and if he will make a statement. [59703]

The Prime Minister: No, except for media interviews.

Freedom of Information Act

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister what changes he has made to administrative procedures within 10 Downing Street following the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [59401]

The Prime Minister: The Freedom of Information Act is now part of the routine business of government. Officials have been provided with guidance on the Act.

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister what steps he takes to ensure that his answering practices are consistent with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [59408]

The Prime Minister: Practice and procedures are set out in the February 2005 Cabinet Office guidance to departments entitled "Guidance to Officials on Drafting Answers to Parliamentary Questions." Copies of the guidance are available in the Libraries of the House.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Peter Law: To ask the Prime Minister what the basis was for his statement to the Liaison Committee on 8 February that international agreement on greenhouse gas emissions needs to be agreed by 2012 to avoid an ecological tipping point on climate change. [60620]

The Prime Minister: The Kyoto Protocol agreement only covers agreed action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to 2012. Further international negotiations will be necessary in order to secure a second commitment period under the Protocol, beginning in 2013.

The overwhelming scientific evidence stresses the need for urgent action to enable emissions to peak and decline within the next decade if we are to get on track to avoid dangerous impacts. Any prospects for such urgent action depend on international agreement for the period beyond 2012.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister on what date he last travelled by train on official business. [59402]

The Prime Minister: I travel making the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements, and use trains as and when appropriate. My travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers".

Mrs. C. Blair (Security Costs)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister whether his wife will contribute personally to the cost of providing for her security during her forthcoming trips to *(a)* the USA and *(b)* the United Arab Emirates. [60827]

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive governments not to comment on security issues.

Pakistan

Peter Law: To ask the Prime Minister whether he discussed *(a)* the prospects of Pakistan joining the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and *(b)* Iran's compliance with the NPT during his meeting with his Pakistani counterpart on 6 March. [60622]

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his recent meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan. [61014]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with the Prime Minister Aziz during his recent visit, including Kashmir and Afghanistan. I also refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the press conference I held with Prime Minister Aziz on 6 March, a transcript of which is available on the No. 10 website.

I had no discussions on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) also met Prime Minister Aziz during his visit where they discussed a wide range of issues, including Iranian compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its obligations arising from the Treaty.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Additional Learning Support

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent on additional learning support in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; and how much has been allocated for 2006–07. [60789]

Jacqui Smith: The Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Additional Learning Support (ALS) allows further education (FE) providers to meet the extra costs to enable learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or other needs to fully access learning provision to achieve their learning aims. ALS can be claimed by colleges and other FE providers to cover the extra costs of learning required by an individual—for example, additional support, learning aids, materials etc. The LSC allocates ALS funds to colleges and other FE providers as part of their overall FE funding allocation. In 2004/05 the ALS spend was £333.3 million. Spend for 2005/06 is not yet available but the LSC allocated £340.3 million to colleges and other FE providers in 2005/06. The LSC is still in discussion with learning providers for 2006/07 allocations. The provisional allocation for 2006/07 is £366.2 million and this will be confirmed when the LSC agrees final budgets with providers in May.

Bullying

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what initiatives her Department is undertaking aimed at preventing bullying in schools; [60738]

(2) what steps she is taking to ensure that children who cannot attend school as a result of bullying are able to use alternative educational arrangements; [60739]

(3) what measures she uses to assess bullying trends in schools. [60740]

Jacqui Smith: This Government have given an unprecedentedly high profile to tackling and preventing bullying, as well as supporting those who have been bullied. Since 1999 it has been compulsory for every school to have an anti bullying policy in place which details how the school will tackle bullying. Our anti bullying work, including the anti bullying charter for action, takes an integrated approach to preventing bullying, to addressing causes of bullying—for example prejudice—and to helping those who are bullied.

As recommended by the Practitioners Group on Behaviour and Discipline, the recent White Paper committed the Department to producing specific guidance for schools on prejudice driven bullying. At the beginning of this month, we launched our new advice 'Bullying around racism, religion and culture; how to prevent it and what to do when it happens' as the first of this suite of materials. There is a major emphasis within this advice on prevention. The advice is presented as a set of interactive web pages on the teachernet website and is being supported by a national programme of dissemination events. Feedback from schools and local authorities so far has been overwhelmingly positive. We will be following this with specific advice on countering homophobic bullying later in 2006.

We have secured a very broad consensus, with all the teaching professional associations and the Anti Bullying Alliance (ABA) signing up to our anti bullying charter for action. The charter is a voluntary commitment to creating a school community where bullying is not tolerated. In 2006 we plan to share examples of where the charter has been particularly well implemented with other schools so that they can learn from this best practice. The charter contains a significant emphasis on prevention.

Through our work with the ABA, an organisation comprising over 65 leading anti bullying charities and experts, we provide schools and local authorities with expert help to tackle bullying, including prevention. The National Strategies' behaviour materials provide schools with support [illegible] preventing and responding to bullying.

We have put more adults than ever in our schools—teachers, classroom assistants, learning mentors, Connexions personal advisers, behaviour and education support teams and police officers—so that a wide range of people are available to help prevent and tackle bullying.

Anti bullying week continues to be a successful event with a large number of schools taking part in November 2005's activities through a wide variety of national and local events. There was a considerable amount of positive press coverage and this year over 325,000 anti bullying wristbands were distributed.

Our anti bullying resource pack for schools "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", updated in 2000 and September 2002 will be revised and re-issued in the summer term 2006 to ensure schools have the most up-to-date information available on preventing and tackling bullying.

In addition the Department has recently launched the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum resource—an intervention to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills from foundation stage to year 6. It is available to all primary schools and the evidence from the pilot suggests that it helps reduce bullying and promotes positive behaviour generally. It is an important arm of the Department's longer term policy to promote positive behaviour and attendance and prevent bullying. The Department is hoping to build on the work carried out in primary schools by providing a similar whole school curriculum based resource for secondary schools (SEBS). At present the programme is in a very early pilot stage.

In England, local authorities have a duty to provide a suitable education at school or otherwise for each child of compulsory school age who, for reasons of illness, exclusion or otherwise, would not receive it unless such arrangements were made. It is, therefore, for local authorities, in consultation with parents, to decide the most appropriate educational provision for a child that cannot attend school as a result of bullying.

The Department has issued guidance for local authorities and schools on PRUs and alternative provision, and on the commissioning of alternative provision; all local authorities and schools should have regard to this guidance.

National statistics on incidents of bullying are not available.

Our departmental guidance suggests that schools and local authorities should use all the data available to them, through behaviour audits, self evaluation and pupil surveys, to assist them in monitoring bullying incidents within their schools and to assess the impact of their own anti bullying initiatives.

Care Leavers

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people left the care of each local authority in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [59173]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is available from the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000569/index.shtml.

Child Care

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what child care services the additional capital investment in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08 will fund in (i) the West Midlands region and (ii) Coventry, South; [60140]

(2) how many under-fives entitled to free nursery places on the Sure Start scheme are on waiting lists in the West Midlands; [60141]

(3) how many empty places there are in Sure Start nurseries in the West Midlands. [60142]

Beverley Hughes: The General Sure Start Grant will make available to the West Midlands region £47,135,019 million in 2006–07 and £43,950,404 million in 2007–08 in capital funding. Coventry local authority's capital allocation for this period is £2,364,977 and £2,223,384 respectively. Local authorities have been given the freedom to determine how best to invest these funds to deliver the Ten-Year Childcare Strategy, including the development of children's centres, extended schools and other child care.

Information on the number of children on waiting lists for Sure Start services or empty places in Sure Start nurseries in the West Midlands is not collected centrally.

Children's Centres

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many disabled children, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, have used children's centres since their introduction. [60259]

Beverley Hughes: Information on how many disabled children have received a service from children's centres is not available centrally at present.

Consultants

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the reports from consultants which have been submitted to her Department over the past 12 months; what the name of the supplier was in each case; and what fees were charged in each case. [59826]

Bill Rammell: This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1863W, on departmental telephone numbers, what the revenue is from *(a)* 0845 and *(b)* 0870 numbers maintained by her Department. [60865]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills does not participate in revenue share schemes associated with 0845 and 0870 telephone numbers and therefore derives no revenue from the use of these numbers.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of education maintenance allowance on staying on rates in Tamworth constituency; and if she will make a statement. [58072]

Maria Eagle: EMA was subject to one of the most comprehensive evaluations of any educational initiative. It was piloted in 10 areas (plus five others in London/Leeds) and the evaluation followed two cohorts of 16-year-olds for four years from 1999/2000 and 2000/01. Their outcomes were compared to those of matched individuals in 11 control areas. It was extended to a further 41 areas in 2000/01 so that it was operating in around one third of the country.

The results indicated that EMA increased participation of eligible young people in the pilot areas by 5.9 percentage points. This is equivalent to an increase in participation of all 16-year-olds across the whole country of 3.8 percentage points. EMA was extended to 16-year-olds in the remaining two thirds of the country in September 2004. There was a 1.9 percentage point increase in participation of 16-year-olds in full-time education between 2003/04 and 2004/05. This is in line with the increase in participation which was expected from the roll out of EMA and is the largest increase in participation for over 10 years. While it is not possible to say that all of the increase was due to EMA, this was one of the most important initiatives aimed at increasing participation.

EMA was extended to 17-year-olds in September 2005 and will be fully extended to 18-year-olds from September 2006.

Further education participation estimates are not available at constituency level, but are produced at local authority level. Staffordshire local authority, covering Tamworth constituency, was not a pilot area so 2004/05 was the first year for which EMA was available. Local participation figures for 2004/05 are not due to be published until the end of March 2006. When these become available, the DfES and LSC will be doing further analyses to try to get a better estimate of the increase in participation which might be due to EMA. However, it will not be possible to attribute any changes to EMA alone, since there will have been other factors which will have influenced participation. It will not be possible to make any reasonable assessment of the impact for individual local authorities.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of education maintenance allowance on staying on rates *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Hendon; and if she will make a statement. [56983]

Maria Eagle: EMA was subject to one of the most comprehensive evaluations of any educational initiative. It was piloted in 10 areas (plus five others in London/Leeds) and the evaluation followed two cohorts of 16-year-olds for four years from 1999/2000 and 2000/01. Their outcomes were compared to those of matched individuals in 11 control areas. It was extended to a further 41 areas in 2000/01 so that it was operating in around one third of the country.

The results indicated that EMA increased participation of eligible young people in the pilot areas by 5.9 percentage points. This is equivalent to an increase in participation of all 16-year-olds across the whole country of 3.8 percentage points. There was a particularly strong impact for key target groups:

young males (1.2 times impact),

none/low/middle achievers (1.3 to 1.7 times impact)

lower SEG groups (1.3 to 1.6 times impact)

The results also showed positive impacts on retention from Y13 to Y14, and also on an individual's attachment to education, as measured by number of terms which they stay in education to age 19.

EMA was extended to 16-year-olds in the remaining two thirds of the country in September 2004. There was a 1.9 percentage point increase in participation of 16-year-olds in full-time education between 2003/04 and 2004/05. This is in line with the increase in participation which was expected from the roll out of EMA and is the largest increase in participation for over 10 years. While it is not possible to say that all of the increase was due to EMA, this was one of the most important initiatives aimed at increasing participation. The Department and LSC will be doing further analyses of local participation when these become available to try to get a better estimate of the change which might be due to EMA. EMA was extended to 17-year-olds in September 2005 and will be fully extended to 18-year-olds from September 2006.

This year the LSC has adopted the strategy of measuring EMA take-up to show early impact of the scheme locally. Volumes are on target, and take-up among poorer students is higher than originally projected, which is the group upon whom EMA is likely to have the greatest beneficial effect. Take-up among 16-year-olds largely met or exceeded estimated figures in 2004/05. Where take-up is lower than anticipated, the local LSC targets additional support to raise awareness of EMA and increase the figures.

On the take up of EMAs in Hendon, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column1866W.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to promote energy efficiency within *(a)* schools, *(b)* colleges and *(c)* universities; and if she will make a statement. [60453]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are promoting energy efficiency through a range of measures.

Building on the Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills launched in 2003, the DfES and its partners are undertaking a wide range of measures to promote energy efficiency in all educational buildings.

(a) Schools—There is extensive guidance available to improve energy efficiency within existing schools[1], together with minimum standards that cover energy efficiency and renewable energy for new buildings and refurbishments within the schools capital programme.

(b) Colleges—Energy efficiency is promoted through good practice guidance and property benchmarking which enables colleges to compare their energy efficiency performance. Further work is currently underway into the cost-effectiveness of energy efficient design and sustainable development.

(c) Universities—Energy management guidance has been published for higher education establishments[2], and there are a number of ongoing initiatives to encourage energy efficiency. Universities are now required to demonstrate that environmental sustainability has been addressed in the deployment of capital funding.

The Government are also currently reviewing the approach that all educational establishments adopt for energy procurement to identify actions that result in further cost savings.

[1] http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sd/focuson/energy/energymanagement/

[2] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/

Ergonomic Desks

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what research her Department has commissioned on a possible correlation between ergonomic desks and students' learning ability; [59734]

(2) what research her Department has commissioned on the possible effect of school furniture on students' osteopathic health. [59735]

Jacqui Smith: There has been no formal research regarding a possible correlation either between ergonomic desks (or school furniture as a whole) and osteopathic health or students' learning ability but the Department is aware of the importance as a whole of a pupils learning environment, both to their performance and feeling of well being. Informal discussions, however, have been held with the National Back Pain Association in the recent past and we are aware of that organisation's concerns in this regard. Schools are now free to purchase their own furniture and equipment and to determine their own spending priorities. Advice in the Department's 'Furniture and Equipment Purchasing Guide', is therefore given on economically adjustable furniture and it's pro's and con's.

As part of our awareness of ergonomics the Department have developed an ergonomics website which allows teachers, building professionals and even children themselves to determine the correct size of furniture for a particular pupil. The site offers solutions to size mis-match—a major cause of discomfort among pupils. This site has utilised child size data gathered in a 2001 survey jointly funded by the Department.

Examination Fees

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the reasons for the change in examination entry fees charged to secondary schools since 1997. [60793]

Jacqui Smith: Spending on exam fees is 0.7 percent. of school spending in England. The responsibility for monitoring examination fees lies with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), as part of its responsibility for overseeing the examinations system in England. Changes to total spending on examination fees may reflect a number of factors, including increases in the number of candidates taking examinations, or payment of penalty fees for late entries.

It is important that the examinations system has the investment necessary to ensure it remains robust and secure. However, we also need to be confident that the significant levels of public funding spent on examination fees, by secondary schools and others, provide good value for money. We have therefore asked the QCA to consider what further work it should do in this area.

Free School Meals

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils who attend schools in the East Riding of Yorkshire are entitled to free school meals. [60710]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2] January 2005. East Riding of Yorkshire local authority.

	Maintained nursery and primary schools				
	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals[3]*	*Number known to be eligible for free meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free meals*
England	3,317,590	335,140	10.1	465,520	14.0
East Riding of Yorkshire	23,581	1,102	4.7	1,654	7.0

	Maintained secondary schools				
	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals[3]*	*Number known to be eligible for free meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free meals*
England	3,317,590	335,140	10.1	465,520	14.0
East Riding of Yorkshire	23,581	1,102	4.7	1,654	7.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes dually registered and boarding pupils.

[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the census in January.

Note:

National figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual Schools Census

Free School Transport

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will reduce the statutory distances for eligibility for free school transport for children in rural and semi-rural areas. [60568]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* The Education and Inspections Bill includes measures that will provide a new entitlement to free school transport for pupils from low income backgrounds:

> For primary aged pupils aged over eight, to their nearest school where this is more than two miles from their home; and
>
> For secondary aged pupils to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is between two and six miles.

These new entitlements apply to all areas in England. Statutory walking distance for these pupils is currently three miles.

The Bill also includes provisions to allow a small number of local authorities to propose Pathfinder schemes to test innovative approaches to home to school transport to support school choice, reduce the distances pupils are expected to walk to school more widely, and increase the proportion of pupils travelling by sustainable means.

Identity Fraud

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department has taken to raise awareness of identity fraud amongst its staff. [55883]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The Department takes all form of fraud seriously. In terms of relative risk, identity fraud is not the highest risk in the Department's direct relationships with the public but does figure significantly in relationships with key partners.

The Department's partner organisations are primarily responsible for the distribution of funding and will implement processes that safeguard against fraud risks including identity theft. Guidance issued to partners includes steers on validating identity details. My Department is currently undertaking a review of NDPB partner organisations fraud response plans. This review will ensure identity fraud has been reflected appropriately in their respective fraud strategies.

The Department does provide training for front desk staff (receptionists and security guards) dealing with the public face to face. The induction training includes validating whether a person is who they say they are and whether they are allowed on site in their own right or whether they need to be escorted. After the induction, appointees must sign a declaration that they understand what they have been taught, that they know where the assignment instructions are kept should they need to refer to them and that they know who to contact for further guidance.

In respect of administration staff, dealing with verifying identity is part of the Department's work in administering vetting cases and, in HR, when recruiting new members of staff. The Department's Special Investigations Unit also provides fraud awareness training to Divisions on request.

Jodie Marsh

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to deny Jodie Marsh access to schools for which her Department is responsible. [60882]

Jacqui Smith: Jodie Marsh does not represent the Department for Education and Skills in any way. Decisions about giving people access to pupils in schools are a matter for individual head teachers and governing bodies.

Racism

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2229–30W, on racism, how many incidents of racial discrimination there were in schools in the last five years. [60883]

Jacqui Smith: The requirement to record and report all racist incidents in schools came into force in November 1999. Data on racist incidents are not collected centrally by the Department as we believe that local authorities and schools are much better placed to analyse and respond to the issues raised, which will reflect local situations and tensions.

School Admissions Code

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the draft Schools Admissions Code related to the Education and Inspections Bill will be published. [60240]

Jacqui Smith: We plan to consult on a draft School Admissions Code in September so that, if the Bill is enacted, the new Code will become effective for admission arrangements for 2008. In the meantime, a skeleton document is due for presentation at Commons Committee stage and this will set out the new Code's proposed shape and content.

School Buildings

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1230W, on school buildings, what the terms of reference are of the analysis by the Building Research Establishment on the installation of sprinkler systems in school buildings. [60748]

Jacqui Smith: The Building Research Establishment has been commissioned to produce the following:

- a quantitative assessment of the costs and benefits of fitting automatic fire suppression systems into new schools, based on actual installed system costs and proposed system costs;
- a simple cost/benefit tool to analyse the relative benefit of installing sprinkler systems into new school buildings, taking account of construction types and all direct and indirect costs and benefits;
- a simple fire risk assessment tool for new school buildings.

A guidance document will also be produced, detailing how to approach the fire risk assessment and cost/benefit analysis of fire precaution works, including use of automatic sprinkler systems in school buildings. It will also cover the reasoning behind the process, the importance of having reliable and accurate information, and recommendations for the use of the tools.

School Finance (Swindon)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Swindon borough council will receive each year for the next two years from the Youth Opportunity Fund. [59442]

Maria Eagle: Swindon local authority will receive £111,219 for each of the next two years from the Youth Opportunity Fund. This funding is to be used at young people's discretion to give them choice and influence over things to do and places to go in their area. In addition to this Swindon will receive £96,196 for each of the next two years from the Youth Capital Fund. This funding is to improve facilities and to provide equipment which young people want in their neighbourhood. The two funds are designed to work in tandem. The combined funding for each year is £207,415 which amounts to a total of £404,830.

School Food Trust

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) on what research the School Food Trust based its *(a)* recommendation for healthier snack models and *(b)* decision to ban the sale of confectionery in secondary schools; and whether this research has been published; [60782]

(2) whether the School Food Trust has surveyed foods on offer outside lunch in secondary schools to provide baseline data to assess the impact of its recommendations on obesity rates among secondary school pupils. [60783]

Jacqui Smith: The School Food Trust's advice to ban the sale of confectionery in schools reflects the Government's healthy eating guidance set out in the "Balance of Good Health", which indicates that these foods may be eaten occasionally but should not be part of a child or young person's everyday diet.

The School Food Trust's advice on standards for school food other than lunch was informed by evidence from companies selling foods in schools, people providing food in schools and others including researchers and academics. This included evidence from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey: young people aged four-20 years, which showed that sugars comprise about 17 percent. of food energy in children compared to a recommended average of 11 percent. and the main source is soft drinks and confectionery. The full advice, including a list of those who gave evidence, is published on schoolfoodtrust.org.uk.

School Toilets

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will set standards of school toilet provision for pupils to match those required by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, for workers; [60437]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of school toilets in need of refurbishment; [60438]

(3) if she will undertake a review of toilet facilities in schools in England. [60439]

Jacqui Smith: The standards for school toilet provision are given in the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 for maintained schools and in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 for Independent Schools. It is our view that in principle there is little difference between the health, safety and welfare needs of children and adults as regards such things as hygiene and therefore the majority of the requirements concerning toilets set out in the Code of Practice published to inform the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 are equally applicable in the case of accommodation for children or adults.

The Department has not made an assessment of the number of school toilets in England and Wales in need of refurbishment.

The Department is not planning to undertake a review of toilet facilities in schools in England. Local education authorities and schools should already be reviewing both the condition and suitability of the toilets in schools as part of the asset management plan condition and suitability surveys and prioritising work to upgrade the toilets where necessary. Schools themselves are responsible for keeping the toilets in a clean and orderly condition.

Schools (Lewes)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average number of pupils in an infant class in Lewes constituency was in each year since 1997. [60894]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Legislation limits infant class size to a maximum of 30 pupils to a school teacher. The statistics show that since 1997 there has been a decrease in the average size of infant classes in Lewes falling from 27.8 in 1997 to 25.8 in 2005 and across England as a whole falling from 26.9 in 1997 to 25.6 in 2005.

Data on infant class sizes at national, local authority and parliamentary constituency level can also be found at the following link: Schools and Pupils in England: January 2005 (Final) in the "additional information" sections 4 and 5.

Science

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department takes to ensure that the science curriculum is scientifically rigorous. [59296]

Bill Rammell: Development of the new key stage 4 Programme of Study for science was informed by a number of university-led research projects funded by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). These included research into assessment methods by Kings college university and Southampton university, keeping national curriculum science in step with changing world of 21st century by the university of Leeds and curriculum models by the university of York. In addition a three-year pilot was developed to model the new scientific approaches and was evaluated to ensure scientific rigour. The QCA and the National Foundation for Educational Research also carried out a widespread consultation process on the Programme of Study with schools, colleges, universities and the wider science community. The majority of those included in the consultation supported the changes.

Special Educational Needs

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will increase resources for schools to allow children with severe behavioural difficulties to remain in mainstream education. [59910]

Jacqui Smith: Children with severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) are educated in a range of settings including mainstream schools, PRUs and special schools. We are committed to the principle of inclusion and are providing mainstream schools with the necessary resources to enable them to make suitable provision for children with severe BESD, where possible. Overall total revenue funding per pupil is now £1,070 higher in real terms than in 1997–98 and is set to rise by a further £400 per pupil in real terms by 2007–08.

Within a rising total of overall funding, the funding currently provided by Excellence in Cities and the Behaviour Improvement Programme that can be used for more specialised behaviour provision like learning mentors, learning support units and multi-agency behaviour support teams will continue. The Government have also made available an additional £300 million over the last three years to support the general expansion of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), helping to improve access to more specialist mental health support and advice. These additional resources alongside the new, integrated, multi-agency children services, mean that schools will be better able to support pupils with a wide variety of needs, including those with severe BESD, within mainstream education.

Sports Clubs

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what additional funding will be made available for sports clubs to ensure that young people have access to at least two hours of sport per week outside school, as proposed in the consultation response, "Youth Matters: Next Steps". [59952]

Maria Eagle: As part of the national school sport strategy, £18 million has been set aside for 2003 to 2008 for the school/club links programme, to encourage and strengthen links between schools and sports clubs. Through this programme, we are working with the national governing bodies of sport to provide a safe environment for young people to take part in sport beyond school in accredited sports clubs.

Funding of £100 million is also being invested in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Community Club development programme, which is increasing participation and widening access to sports clubs for all areas of the community.

Funding beyond 2008 is subject to the next comprehensive spending review.

Student Bankruptcy

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students resident in Suffolk declared themselves bankrupt in 2005. [58511]

Bill Rammell: Two borrowers with publicly owned student loans, whose awarding local authority is Suffolk, have so far informed the Student Loans Company (SLC) that they became bankrupt during calendar year 2005.

Figures separately identifying undergraduates are not available; students on postgraduate initial teacher training courses can be eligible for loans. There may be delays between borrowers becoming bankrupt and notifying the Student Loans Company, therefore figures could increase in future.

The Higher Education Act 2004 included provisions to prevent student loans being written off on discharge from bankruptcy. However bankrupt borrowers continue to benefit from the same non-commercial loan terms as other borrowers, with subsidised interest rates and no obligation to repay if their annual income is below £15,000.

Teacher Salaries

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average starting salary was for newly qualified teachers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Oxford in each of the last 10 years. [58272]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available below regional level.

The following tables provide the average salary of newly qualified teachers by Government Office Region and phase, for each of the latest three years available.

Newly Qualified Teachers: Average salary[1] of teachers gaining qualified teacher status[2] in calendar year 2003 teaching full-time in the maintained schools sector in March 2004[3] by Government Office Region, phase, sex and age, England

	Region of service at 31 March 2004				
	North East	*North West*	*Yorkshire and The Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*
Nursery and primary					
Men					
Under 25	18,210	18,160	18,200	18,160	18,140
25–29	18,110	19,310	18,290	18,240	18,340
30–34	—	19,140	18,360	—	19,210
35–39	—	—	—	—	19,900
40–49	—	—	—	—	19,700
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	18,160	18,760	18,410	18,180	18,690
Women					
Under 25	18,270	18,120	18,130	18,190	18,120
25–29	18,210	18,770	18,370	18,280	18,360
30–34	18,160	18,880	18,600	18,230	18,610
35–39	18,110	19,020	19,320	18,220	19,030
40–49	18,110	19,230	19,310	18,240	18,740
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	18,230	18,420	18,320	18,220	18,300
Men and Women	18,220	18,470	18,330	18,210	18,340
Secondary					
Men					
Under 25	18,160	18,470	18,220	18,340	18,290
25–29	18,310	18,540	18,450	18,750	18,760
30–34	18,880	20,210	19,140	18,910	19,620
35–39	—	20,310	20,280	19,900	20,210
40–49	19,390	21,300	20,610	19,790	21,140
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	18,550	19,170	18,840	18,860	19,130
Women					
Under 25	18,180	18,620	18,190	18,370	18,210
25–29	18,330	19,200	18,420	18,580	18,570
30–34	18,630	19,540	19,170	18,840	19,160
35–39	18,830	20,440	19,760	19,740	20,160
40–49	18,840	21,520	19,560	19,300	20,380
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	13,340	19,130	18,510	18,610	18,680
Men and Women	18,410	19,140	18,630	18,700	18,840
Special and PRU					
Men	—	—	—	—	—
Women	19,880	20,140	—	—	—
Men and Women	19,880	20,180	—	20,790	20,210
Maintained schools sector					
Men	18,470	19,110	18,790	18,730	19,040
Women	18,320	18,830	18,420	18,410	18,490
Men and Women	18,360	18,900	18,530	18,500	18,620

	Region of service at 31 March 2004				
	East of England	*London*	*South East*	*South West*	*England*
Nursery and primary					
Men					
Under 25	18,410	21,890	18,380	18,150	18,710
25–29	18,440	21,520	18,460	18,320	19,030
30–34	—	22,410	18,800	18,520	19,370
35–39	—	22,970	18,940	—	19,670

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	Region of service at 31 March 2004				
	East of England	London	South East	South West	England
40–49	—	—	19,420	18,410	19,470
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	18,560	22,030	18,670	18,300	19,050
Women					
Under 25	18,570	21,100	18,380	18,130	18,730
25–29	18,650	21,620	18,510	18,150	19,170
30–34	18,770	21,940	18,700	18,250	19,430
35–39	18,800	21,780	18,550	18,230	19,190
40–49	18,820	22,390	18,950	18,450	19,510
50 and over	—	—	—	—	20,010
All ages	18,630,	21,440	18,490	18,180	18,960
Men and Women	18,630	21,500	18,510	18,200	18,970
Secondary					
Men					
Under 25	18,890	21,310	18,750	18,190	18,720
25–29	19,540	22,080	19,280	18,540	19,230
30–34	19,990	24,370	19,880	18,980	20,270
35–39	21,090	24,180	20,220	19,910	20,860
40–49	22,160	25,150	21,180	19,800	21,320
50 and over	—	25,050	—	—	21,650
All ages	19,750	22,860	19,430	18,810	19,580
Women					
Under 25	18,820	21,420	18,780	18,200	18,780
25–29	19,390	22,090	19,240	18,460	19,380
30–34	20,400	23,460	20,080	19,230	20,130
35–39	20,540	23,500	20,010	18,900	20,430
40–49	20,200	24,180	20,390	18,830	20,510
50 and over	—	—	—	—	20,450
All ages	19,350	22,210	19,240	18,460	19,310
Men and Women	19,490	22,420	19,310	18,590	19,400
Special and PRU					
Men	—	—	—	—	21,050
Women	21,150	—	20,530	—	20,580
Men and Women	21,210	—	20,650	—	20,660
Maintained schools sector					
Men	19,530	22,650	19,240	18,700	19,470
Women	18,970	21,750	18,840	18,340	19,140
Men and Women	19,090	21,930	18,930	18,440	19,220

[1] Averages are not shown where based on less than 10 teachers (indicated by —)

[2] Includes all new entrants to maintained schools in England, qualifying in England or Wales in 2003, including SCITT and OU but exclude those qualifying through employment based routes

[3] Provisional estimates. The numbers shown as in service may increase as a result of late receipt of annual service returns

Source:

Database of Teacher Records and General Teaching Council

Newly Qualified Teachers: Average salary[1] of teachers gaining qualified teacher status[2] in calendar year 2002 teaching full-time in the maintained schools sector in March 2003[3] by Government Office Region, phase, sex and age, England

	Region of service at 31 March 2003				
	North East	North West	Yorkshire and The Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands
Nursery and primary					
Men					
Under 25	17,620	17,630	17,600	17,740	17,810
25–29	17,670	18,390	18,010	17,880	17,980
30–34	—	18,530	18,620	—	—
35–39	—	18,790	—	—	—
40–49	—	—	—	—	—
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	17,730	18,170	17,950	17,860	18,050
Women					
Under 25	17,660	17,630	17,640	17,670	17,650
25–29	17,660	17,980	17,900	17,840	17,900
30–34	17,650	18,330	18,800	17,760	18,540
35–39	17,700	18,820	18,780	17,810	18,180
40–49	17,720	18,740	18,570	17,980	18,710
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	17,660	17,870	17,930	17,730	17,830
Men and Women	17,670	17,910	17,930	17,740	17,860
Secondary					
Men					
Under 25	17,700	17,720	17,730	17,860	17,870
25–29	17,790	18,280	18,230	18,370	18,230
30–34	18,960	18,990	19,400	19,090	18,760
35–39	18,070	19,790	19,570	19,470	19,970
40–49	18,950	20,190	20,040	19,680	20,890
50 and over	—	22,770	—	—	—
All ages	18,080	18,580	18,540	18,470	18,630

Newly Qualified Teachers: Average salary[1] of teachers gaining qualified teacher status[2] in calendar year 2002 teaching full-time in the maintained schools sector in March 2003[3] by Government Office Region, phase, sex and age, England

	Region of service at 31 March 2003				
	North East	North West	Yorkshire and The Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands
Women					
Under 25	17,670	17,680	17,810	17,800	17,820
25–29	17,950	18,280	18,140	18,120	18,180
30–34	18,250	19,030	19,080	18,840	18,840
35–39	18,580	20,080	19,600	19,050	19,360
40–49	18,490	19,530	19,680	18,540	19,930
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	17,910	18,300	18,240	18,100	18,300
Men and Women	17,970	18,400	18,350	18,240	18,400
Special and PRU					
Men	—	—	—	—	—
Women	—	19,120	—	—	20,620
Men and Women	—	19,280	—	—	20,510
Maintained schools sector					
Men	18,010	18,490	18,430	18,370	18,510
Women	17,790	18,100	18,090	17,920	18,080
Men and Women	17,840	18,190	18,170	18,030	18,180

	Region of service at 31 March 2003				
	East of England	London	South East	South West	England
Nursery and primary					
Men					
Under 25	18,030	20,590	17,840	17,630	18,060
25–29	17,930	21,370	17,860	17,860	18,500
30–34	—	21,860	—	17,950	19,070
35–39	19,240	21,740	18,740	—	19,190
40–49	19,600	22,240	18,670	—	19,300
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	18,310	21,340	18,080	17,830	18,520
Women					
Under 25	17,970	20,520	17,920	17,620	18,070
25–29	17,980	20,990	18,000	17,690	18,520
30–34	18,270	21,670	18,370	17,920	19,050
35–39	18,390	21,530	18,530	17,710	18,940
40–49	18,470	21,970	18,290	18,040	18,970
50 and over	—	—	—	—	19,820
All ages	18,070	20,990	18,040	17,700	18,370
Men and Women	18,100	21,030	18,050	17,720	18,390
Secondary					
Men					
Under 25	18,120	20,640	18,180	17,690	18,150
25–29	18,960	21,830	18,830	18,090	18,780
30–34	20,760	23,020	19,630	18,690	19,780
35–39	20,310	23,270	20,290	18,770	20,120
40–49	21,410	24,190	21,200	19,160	20,760
50 and over	—	—	21,760	—	21,860
All ages	19,150	22,150	19,100	18,280	19,060
Women					
Under 25	18,150	20,790	18,190	17,900	18,200
25–29	18,830	21,650	18,730	17,950	18,740
30–34	19,960	22,910	19,960	18,490	19,750
35–39	19,920	23,760	20,160	18,660	20,120
40–49	20,120	23,840	20,190	18,620	20,160
50 and over	—	—	20,110	—	20,460
All ages	18,740	21,810	18,790	18,060	18,780
Men and Women	18,880	21,920	18,890	18,140	18,880
Special and PRU					
Men	—	—	—	—	20,620
Women	20,250	—	19,760	—	20,140
Men and Women	20,290	—	20,290	19,490	20,220
Maintained schools sector					
Men	18,940	21,920	18,880	18,170	18,940
Women	18,380	21,320	18,370	17,890	18,570
Men and Women	18,510	21,450	18,490	17,960	18,650

[1] Averages are not shown where based on less than 10 teachers (indicated by —)

[2] Includes all new entrants to maintained schools in England, qualifying in England or Wales in 2003, including SCITT and OU but exclude those qualifying through employment based routes

[3] Provisional estimates. The numbers shown as in service may increase as a result of late receipt of annual service returns

Source:

Database of Teacher Records

Newly Qualified Teachers: Average salary[1] of teachers gaining qualified teacher status[2] in calendar year 2001 teaching full-time in the maintained schools sector in March 2002[3] by Government Office Region, phase, sex and age, England

	Region of service at 31 March 2002				
	North East	*North West*	*Yorkshire and The Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*
Nursery and primary					
Men					
Under 25	16,930	17,000	17,000	17,000	16,920
25–29	17,000	17,210	17,400	17,170	17,030
30–34	17,470	17,330	17,810	17,280	17,290
35–39	—	—	18,010	—	18,030
40–49	—	—	—	—	—
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	17,100	17,280	17,600	17,210	17,230
Women					
Under 25	16,970	17,010	17,020	17,030	16,940
25–29	17,000	17,230	17,200	16,980	17,000
30–34	16,980	18,280	17,740	17,190	17,450
35–39	17,000	17,880	17,720	17,220	17,770
40–49	16,860	18,100	18,170	17,470	18,240
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	16,970	17,250	17,180	17,070	17,090
Men and Women	16,990	17,260	17,240	17,090	17,110
Secondary					
Men					
Under 25	16,970	16,990	16,990	16,990	17,020
25–29	17,350	17,430	17,580	17,390	17,140
30–34	17,650	18,160	18,090	18,160	17,780
35–39	18,260	18,710	18,780	18,810	18,710
40–49	18,390	19,620	—	18,690	20,500
50 and over	—	19,670	—	—	—
All ages	17,470	17,790	17,600	17,530	17,720
Women					
Under 25	16,970	17,020	17,190	17,260	17,050
25–29	17,140	17,310	17,400	17,460	17,150
30–34	17,760	17,810	18,030	17,860	17,860
35–39	17,490	18,760	18,390	18,170	17,810
40–49	17,550	18,600	19,500	17,700	18,300
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	17,170	17,420	17,530	17,440	17,290
Men and Women	17,270	17,540	17,550	17,470	17,430
Special and PRU					
Men	—	—	—	—	—
Women	—	—	—	—	20,120
Men and Women	—	—	—	—	19,810
Maintained schools sector					
Men	17,400	17,680	17,600	17,460	17,610
Women	17,070	17,340	17,340	17,240	17,210
Men and Women	17,140	17,420	17,400	17,300	17,300

	Region of service at 31 March 2002				
	East of England	*London*	*South East*	*South West*	*England*
Nursery and primary					
Men					
Under 25	17,740	20,020	17,230	17,000	17,410
25–29	17,410	20,190	17,390	17,120	17,730
30–34	20,350	21,250	17,480	17,320	18,300
35–39	—	22,120	18,330	—	18,810
40–49	18,130	22,660	—	—	19,200
50 and over	—	—	—	—	—
All ages	18,050	20,830	17,440	17,210	17,910
Women					
Under 25	17,390	20,200	17,220	17,000	17,500
25–29	17,530	20,450	17,270	17,010	17,870
30–34	17,900	20,820	17,540	17,060	18,250
35–39	17,560	20,740	17,730	17,250	18,100
40–49	17,970	20,790	17,540	17,210	18,300
50 and over	—	—	—	—	18,840
All ages	17,500	20,410	17,320	17,050	17,720
Men and Women	17,560	20,460	17,330	17,070	17,750
Secondary					
Men					
Under 25	17,340	20,060	17,480	17,010	17,420
25–29	18,100	20,520	18,050	17,250	17,990
30–34	18,830	21,250	18,570	18,050	18,600
35–39	19,690	23,100	19,380	18,380	19,470
40–49	19,960	23,270	19,660	19,200	20,220
50 and over	—	—	—	—	20,460

	Region of service at 31 March 2002				
	East of England	*London*	*South East*	*South West*	*England*
All ages	18,210	21,220	18,240	17,550	18,250
Women					
Under 25	17,460	20,190	17,480	17,020	17,510
25–29	17,830	20,480	17,940	17,400	17,890
30–34	18,640	21,760	18,610	17,700	18,690
35–39	18,130	21,600	18,740	17,760	18,680
40–49	18,610	22,130	19,010	17,910	19,000
50 and over	—	—	—	—	19,150
All ages	17,800	20,720	17,940	17,340	17,920
Men and Women	17,940	20,890	18,040	17,410	18,030
Special and PRU					
Men	—	—	—	—	19,670
Women	—	—	—	—	19,740
Men and Women	—	—	—	—	19,720
Maintained schools sector					
Men	18,170	21,110	18,060	17,450	18,170
Women	17,620	20,530	17,590	17,180	17,820
Men and Women	17,740	20,650	17,690	17,240	17,890

[1] Averages are not shown where based on less than 10 teachers (indicated by —)

[2] Includes all new entrants to maintained schools in England, qualifying in England or Wales in 2003, including SCITT and OU but exclude those qualifying through employment based routes

[3] Provisional estimates. The numbers shown as in service may increase as a result of late receipt of annual service returns

Source:

Database of Teacher Records and General Teaching Council

Teachers' Loans

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 600W, on teachers' loans, whether any public funds disbursed under the Teachers' Loans Scheme have been assessed as irretrievable; and if she will make a statement. [59868]

Jacqui Smith: The Repayment of Teachers' Loans (RTL) scheme repays the student loans of eligible teachers of priority subjects who have been accepted onto the scheme. Under the scheme, the Government reduce the loan balance annually, writing off the student loans of eligible teachers over a period of up to 10 years.

There are safeguards in the RTL process which mean that there should be no cases where public funds could be assessed as irretrievable and to date, none have been. The balance on the student loan is reduced once the teacher has confirmed their eligibility to remain on the scheme for the preceding year. This is part of an annual review process. If a teacher fails to confirm their eligibility or to return the annual review form, no further loan reductions are made under the RTL scheme. This should mean that teachers do not benefit from RTL in advance of entitlement as loans are not paid off without confirmation of entitlement. If a teacher notifies a change in circumstances which affects their entitlement, the SLC adjusts the repayment account to reflect the date of the change.

Thames Gateway Strategy

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress the Government have made towards meeting the commitment given in Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway *(a)* to raise the number of people qualified up to NVQ Level 3 and *(b)* to increase the number of work-based training opportunities. [54700]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

"Creating sustainable communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway", published in March 2005, set out progress to date and outlined the Government's plans for the future development of the Thames Gateway.

Later this year, we will publish a Strategic Framework for the Gateway, which will cover latest progress and form the basis of a delivery plan for the future.

As an early indicator of progress, however, recently published data from the Learning Skills Council show Level 3 attainment by young people in the Thames Gateway. The data shows that the number of 19-year-olds achieving a Level 3 qualification increased from 13,608 in 2004 to 15,143 in 2005. This equates to a 3 per cent. increase, and contributes to the overall raising of qualification levels of the Thames Gateway population.

On the point of work-based training opportunities, according to the Learning and Skills Council's Thames Gateway Directorate, the substantial increase in learner achievements of apprenticeships and the associated costs has meant that the number of starts on apprenticeships in the Thames Gateway have decreased from 2004/05 to 2005/06. This concurs with the national picture. The increase in achievements is very good news as we committed ourselves to improving the quality of work-based learning in Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway. The success rates on apprenticeships in the Thames Gateway have risen from 43 per cent. in 2003/04 to 47.4 per cent. in 2004/05.

As referenced in Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway, for example, the ODPM has also contributed £4 million to the expansion of Prospects College in Southend, also part-funded by the LSC. Prospects College delivers work-based learning in engineering and construction. The expansion will increase the capacity of the college and the number of learner places.

Further work-based learning places have also been created through the 14–19 sector pilots running in parts of the Thames Gateway. Through this programme, support has also been given in order to build capacity for increased delivery of work-based learning. The pilots establish stepping-stone vocational pathways all the way from Key Stage 4 to higher education in the key local sectors.

The Government have also been supporting employers and employees in the Thames Gateway with work-related training through Profit from Learning, the local Treasury-funded Employer Training Pilot. To date, 50,280 employees in 6,730 companies have benefited from the programme across the three LSC areas covering the Thames Gateway.

Truants

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with the Home Department on the deployment of police community support officers to apprehend truants. [60650]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 22 March]:* My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has discussed with my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, the proposal in the Police and Justice Bill to enable chief officers, where appropriate, to allow community support officers to remove truants from public places. Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows local authorities to designate areas from which truants may be removed.

Currently the power to remove truants can only be exercised by police officers. We believe that the proposal to extend this to community support officers will make it easier for local authorities and the police to mount truancy sweeps. It is also an important item in this Government's respect action.

Trust Schools

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many trust schools she expects to be established in the West Midlands over the next four years. [60139]

Jacqui Smith: There are no targets for the number of trust schools to be established within the next four years. This policy is about schools making decisions that are right for them and their children in order to raise standards. It will be for individual schools to decide if they want to acquire a trust, what form that trust should take, and how the trust will help to improve outcomes for pupils.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

1911 Census

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the evidential basis was for the statement by the head of information policy and legislation unit, national archives, that the early publication of extracts from the 1911 census records under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 may place a significant administrative burden on the national archives. [61098]

Ms Harman: The head of the information policy and legislation unit at the national archives has not made any statement to this effect.

Business Appointment Reviews

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs from which *(a)* companies and *(b)* Government departments those interviewed by Sir Patrick Brown in the course of the Department's review of the business appointment reviews came. [60510]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

Sir Patrick Brown was commissioned by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to undertake an independent review of the business appointment rules. In his report, which was published on 20 December, Sir Patrick made clear that as part of the review process he spoke to a range of individuals from organisations in the public and private sectors. These discussions took place on a confidential basis.

Community Legal Aid and Advice Centres

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs over what period the capital costs of community legal aid and advice centres (CLACs) will be recovered; and what assessment she has made of the effects of the recovery period on the overall costs of CLACs. [60187]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) expects Community Legal Advice Centres to be run by existing suppliers in most cases thus minimising capital costs. Over the three-year period of each contract the LSC expects the centres to have comparable cost to the arrangements they replace.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the timetable is for *(a)* developing defined outcome and output measures for community legal aid and advice centres and *(b)* consultation on the measures; and if she will make a statement. [60188]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) is currently consulting with its Local Authority Partners on the development of appropriate outcome and output measures for the first Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks. These will be in place by the launch of the first centres in 2006–07. The LSC will periodically evaluate and consult with its local authority partners on the measures that have been put in place once the first centres are operational.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent in connection with the branding of community legal aid and advice centres and networks. [60189]

Ms Harman: Nothing has been spent on the branding of Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks other than the cost of the time used by officials in the

Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Legal Services Commission, in the course of their normal duties.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she plans to terminate existing social welfare law contracts with *(a)* private and *(b)* other providers as community legal and advice centres are rolled out; and if she will make a statement. [60207]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission may terminate social welfare law contracts where it judges that Community Legal Advice Centres, once established, are providing the necessary services to meet local need. An open tender process will enable suppliers to bid to run the centre or to become part of a network in each area where centres or networks are set up.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Government has to consult on the final model of the community legal and advice centre network; and if she will make a statement. [60239]

Ms Harman: The first Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks will be monitored continuously from their launch in 2006–07. The LSC will monitor the impact and performance of each centre with local authority partners and consult with them on the way forward. An evaluation of the first centres will be published during 2008–09.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken to prevent conflicts of interest between community legal and advice centres and *(a)* local government and *(b)* other sector bodies; and if she will make a statement. [60357]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission will continue to ensure that its contracts and any arrangements made with local authorities guarantee the independence of advice in accordance to its statutory duties.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she plans to take steps to encourage private and other providers to remain in the Community Legal Service. [60278]

Ms Harman: In line with "A Fairer Deal for Legal Aid" and Lord Carter's Review of Legal Aid Procurement, the Legal Services Commission will take the necessary steps to develop a sustainable structure for contracting suppliers to deliver services as part of the Community Legal Service (CLS). During 2005–06, the number of new cases started under the CLS has increased considerably (by around 20 per cent.). Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks will seek to deliver services tailored to need and spanning a number of categories of law. As measures in the new CLS Strategy, announced on the 23 March, are implemented, it is envisaged that opportunities for high quality suppliers will continue to exist.

Court Bailiffs

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length of time taken by court bailiffs to execute a warrant of possession was in *(a)* the Central London County Court jurisdiction and *(b)* England and Wales in 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [59283]

Ms Harman: Information about the average length of time taken by court bailiffs to execute a warrant of possession in *(a)* the Central London County Court jurisdiction and *(b)* England and Wales in 2004–05 is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Elder Abuse

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what systems are in place in her Department to record the number of cases of elder abuse which are dealt with by the courts. [60249]

Ms Harman: Information about the number of cases of elder abuse which are dealt with by the courts is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the maximum period is for a response from a body subject to an appeal after refusal to provide information for a freedom of information request. [57067]

Ms Harman: There is no maximum period for the completion of an internal review requested after a refusal to provide information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However the Secretary of State issued a code of practice

http://www.foi.gov.uk/codepafunc.htm under section 45 of the Act advising public authorities that complaints on the handling of freedom of information requests should be dealt with in accordance with their own complaints procedures. They may set their own target times for dealing with complaints, but these should be reasonable and subject to regular review.

Guidance issued by my Department to public authorities:

http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/proguide/chap09.htm on conducting internal reviews advises that they should be completed in a reasonable timescale. It recommends that simple reviews should be dealt with within two-three weeks. Complex reviews should be dealt with within six weeks.

A person concerned that a public authority's internal review has taken too long, can complain to the Information Commissioner who could then issue a (statutory) good practice recommendation—this could lead to the public authority improving its procedures for carrying out internal reviews.

Headstones

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost to the burial authorities of testing the safety of headstones in the last five years. [56388]

Ms Harman: Information on such costs has not been collated centrally.

HM Court Service

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the future of the Chorley magistrates court house. [48106]

Ms Harman: Chorley courthouse has three courtrooms and these are in use on most weekdays. If the business of the court increases, it is likely that the courtrooms will be in constant use each Monday to Friday. At the present time, this courthouse not only deals with criminal offences committed in the Chorley local justice area but also assists a neighbouring local justice area by dealing with all the cases, where defendants have been kept in custody, from the Leyland district.

Kelly Inquiry

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what factors led to the decision to appoint Lord Hutton to head the inquiry into Dr. David Kelly's death; who took that decision; and who was consulted upon it. [60924]

Ms Harman: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Magistrates

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many magistrates were *(a)* recruited and *(b)* left the service in (i) 2003–04, (ii) 2004–05 and (iii) 2005–06; and how many magistrates there were at the end of each year. [56799]

Ms Harman: Statistics are collated for the financial year ending 31 March.

	Recruited	*Left*	*Serving*
2003–04	1,768	1,446	28,029
2004–05	1,766	1,436	28,300
2005–06	n/a	n/a	[1]28,996

n/a = not available

[1] At 3 March 2006

Middlesex Guildhall

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent to date on the project to site the Supreme Court at Middlesex Guildhall. [56801]

Ms Harman: The amount spent to date on establishing the Supreme Court is set out as follows. These costs are made up of both capital and resource expenditure and reflect the work to date in respect of developing the designs for both construction projects: the refurbishment of Middlesex Guildhall, to adapt it for use as the Supreme Court, and the creation of additional Crown court courtrooms.

£

	Capital	*Resource*	*Amount*
April 2003 to March 2004	—	228,602	228,602
April 2004 to March 2005	—	699,235	699,235
April 2005 to January 2006	3,035,495	405,520	3,441,015
Total	3,035,495	1,333,357	4,368,352

Sark

Justine Greening: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Lord Chancellor is able to intervene in laws passed in the Sark parliament and passed via the Lord Chancellor to the Privy Council for the Queen's Assent; and if she will make a statement. [60951]

Ms Harman: Lord Falconer and I, in our capacity as members of the Privy Council Committee for the Affairs of Jersey and Guernsey, scrutinise every piece of legislation from those Crown Dependencies, including Sark, before deciding whether to recommend it to Privy Council for Royal Assent. That decision will be based on advice from my department's legal advisers and officials after consultation with other UK Government Departments, and the report written by Her Majesty's Procureur (Guernsey's Attorney General) which accompanies Sark legislation when it is submitted to my Department.

Justine Greening: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what record was taken of the meeting held on 8 February in Guernsey between her Department's officials and representatives of Sark; if she will place the minutes in the Library; and if she will make a statement. [60952]

Ms Harman: On 8 February officials from my Department attended a meeting hosted by Guernsey. At that meeting they set out to Guernsey and Sark representatives the process through which legislation from Sark must go before it gains Royal Assent.

The Guernsey Law Officers wrote to Sark on 16 February about the options for modernising Sark's constitution. That letter refers to the meeting on 8 February and is available from the Sark authorities. It has also been placed in the Libraries of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Argentina

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress by the Government of Argentina in introducing its proposed law on the repression of trafficking in persons and assistance to its victims. [60490]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The draft law was presented to the Argentine Congress on 4 August 2005 by the Procuratión General de la Nation, the Argentine equivalent of the Attorney General's Office. It was passed to the Justice and Penal Affairs and Rights and Constitutional Guarantees congressional committees for deliberation on 11 August 2005, where it remains.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on progress made by the Argentine authorities in resolving the case of Marita Verón. [60491]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Our Embassy in Buenos Aires continues to monitor this case. We are not aware of any developments that suggest that the Argentine authorities are close to resolving it.

Data Protection

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons a letter and documents relating to a request under section 7(1) of the Data Protection Act 1996 despatched by special delivery on 14 March 2006 and received by his Department at 1 pm on 15 March 2006 was not processed by the Information Management Group until 20 March 2006; which date will be used for the purposes of the 40 day statutory period; and if he will make a statement. [60790]

Mr. Straw: The letter and documents in question were received by Information Management Group at 9.40 am on 15 March after forwarding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office post room. They were not actioned until 20 March, three working days later, owing to the absence of the addressee. The date used for the purposes of the 40 day statutory period will be 15 March.

Egypt

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Egypt regarding the use of torture. [58809]

Dr. Howells: We regularly raise human rights issues with the Egyptian Government. Our embassy in Cairo last raised the issue of torture with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 December 2005, during discussions on the National Council for Human Rights report.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60344]

Mr. Straw: To increase the energy efficiency of its operations, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is taking the following actions:

Following an energy management survey, upgrading building management systems, lighting and metering at our London and Hanslope Park sites to control and monitor use of energy more effectively;

Setting and monitoring targets for energy reduction, among other environmental issues, through an externally certified Environmental Management System, in line with the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate;

Applying the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method, which includes forecast energy consumption, to new builds and major refurbishments; actively encouraging staff and contractors to follow good practice in using energy efficiently and effectively, for example, through an Energy and Recycling Campaign in February 2006;

Installing software on the next generation of the FCO's global IT network, due to start roll out early in 2007, to power down base units automatically out of hours;

Participating in the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme which will help us to identify opportunities to reduce our use of energy.

Holy See (British Embassy)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the entertainment budget was for the British ambassador to the Holy See in each year since 1983; and what allowances the British ambassador to the Holy See was given in each year. [59475]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Heads of mission are usually paid an accountable allowance, known as Frais, to cover the costs of official entertainment and other representational expenditure, including costs of running a residence which are not paid direct from public funds. The Frais budget for our ambassador to the Holy See for each of the past five years was as follows:

	Budget (£)
2001–02	11,085
2002–03	10,754
2003–04	12,473
2004–05	12,306
2005–06	12,473

Information on earlier years is not readily available and to obtain it would incur disproportionate cost.

The current ambassador, who was appointed through open competition, does not receive Frais, but rather will be able to draw on an allowance of £36,000 for the year 2006–07. That sum, which is higher than the amount of Frais paid in previous years, reflects the shift to out-source catering and should be seen in the context of savings made from employing fewer full-time permanent domestic staff.

An officer posted as ambassador to the Holy See receives the same allowances as an officer of a similar grade posted elsewhere overseas to compensate for the additional costs of living and working overseas.

Iraq/Kuwait

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the amount of oil and gas being flared off in (i) Iraq and (ii) Kuwait and *(b)* its impact on global carbon emissions; what representations the Government have made on this issue to the (A) Iraqi and (B) Kuwaiti authorities; and if he will make a statement. [60347]

Dr. Howells: The latest estimate from the US Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) in Baghdad for the amount of gas flared in Iraq is 770 million standard cubic feet per day for the south and 20 million standard cubic feet for the north.

IRMO has a project under way which aims to increase the amount of liquefied petroleum gas produced in southern Iraq from 1,000 to 3,000 tonnes per day. This will decrease the amount of gas flared in the south, as well as more than doubling the capture of dry gas for use in power stations from 200 million cubic feet (mcf) to 450 mcf.

The UK seeks to support the Iraqi government in developing an integrated and sustainable energy strategy and we look forward to engaging with the incoming Iraqi Government in taking this forward.

Such a strategy will address the linkages between Iraq's oil and gas sectors, as well as associated sectors such as electricity and oil refining. Measures to reduce the amount of gas flared are likely to be a key component of this policy.

Approximately 1.28 million tonnes of gas was flared in Kuwait in 2004–05. There are no published figures for 2005–06. No representations have been made to the Government of Kuwait on this issue.

Data are not readily available on the contribution to global carbon emissions of oil and gas flaring in Iraq and Kuwait. My officials will write to the hon. Member with the information in due course.

Jericho Monitoring Mission

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he received that led him to believe that the incoming Palestinian government would not honour the terms of the Ramallah Agreement regarding the imprisonment of the six prisoners in Jericho prison; and if he will make a statement. [59560]

Mr. Straw: The Palestinian Authority had consistently failed to meet its obligations under the Ramallah Agreement, despite frequent requests from UK and US officials. There was no evidence that the incoming government planned to rectify this situation. On the contrary, since the 25 January Palestinian Legislative Council elections, Hamas officials had called for the release of Ahmad Sa'adat. Other factions, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), of which Sa'adat is the General Secretary, had also repeatedly called for his release. President Abbas had offered to release Sa'adat on condition that the PFLP absolve him of responsibility for the consequences. We therefore had no reason to believe that the incoming Palestinian government would deal with the issue of non-compliance with the agreement, and we had good reason to believe that the incoming government intended to release one or more of the prisoners in contravention of the agreement.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Ramallah Agreement laid down *(a)* terms and *(b)* processes for a termination of the US/UK Jericho Monitoring Mission; and if he will make a statement. [59572]

Mr. Straw: The monitoring arrangements entered into by the UK and the US were with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We regularly reported to both governments about the mission as specified in the Ramallah Agreement. While the Ramallah Agreement did not lay down the exact terms and process for the termination of the UK/US Jericho Monitoring Mission, we were obliged to inform both parties when we were considering terminating our part in the agreement.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment was made of the likely action by the government of Israel in making the decision to withdraw British and US monitors from the prison in Jericho; and if he will make a statement. [59902]

Dr. Howells: We assessed that if UK and US monitors withdrew from the prison Israel might attempt to secure the six detainees potentially resulting in Palestinian casualties. On 10 March the UK and US Ambassadors in Tel Aviv urged Israel to exercise restraint if the monitors had to withdraw. We also gave the Palestinian Authority every opportunity to undertake the measures necessary to avoid us having to take this action. However, ultimately the safety of our personnel had to take precedence.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government regards as the status of the six prisoners held in Jericho prison under the terms of the Ramallah Agreement; and if he will make a statement. [59985]

Mr. Straw: The Ramallah Agreement states that the arrangements within it are without prejudice to the stated position of the parties concerned on the current and future legal status of the six detainees, and that final resolution of the issue is for agreement between the two parties. We believe that this remains the case. For now the prisoners remain in Israeli custody.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55208]

Mr. Straw: The following amounts were spent on presentational skills and training in speaking skills in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and include media training as well as training for press officers at British embassies.

No records are available prior to 2000.

	£
2000–01	110,000
2001–02	131,000
2002–03	91,000
2003–04	116,000
2004–05	138,000
2005–06 (estimate)	130,000

In 2005–06 the FCO is estimated to have spent £57,000 on the training courses with greatest coverage of media skills. A detailed breakdown for previous years cannot be provided.

Meetings (Indian Government)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings he has had in each of the previous five years with representatives of the Indian Government; and what meetings are planned. [59925]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary held the following number of meetings with representatives of the Indian Government:

	Number
2001	4
2002	9
2003	1
2004	7
2005	4

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary currently has no meetings planned with representatives of the Indian Government.

Palestine

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what mechanisms have been employed in the past to protect against the diversion of UK funding to the Palestinian Territories into terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement; [59887]

(2) whether UK disbursement of funds to the Palestinian Territories has been contingent upon signed declarations by the recipient parties that funds will not be diverted to terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [59886]

Hilary Benn: I have been asked to reply.

The UK Government absolutely condemn all acts of terrorism and takes concerns over the use of UK and European Community (EC) aid very seriously. We have not and would not allow taxpayers' money to be used to fund terrorism.

Since 2004, UK and European Community financial support to the budget of the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been provided through a Reform Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank. Funding is conditional on the achievement of benchmarks for reform, progress against which is carefully monitored. The benchmarks cover the PA's audit and accounting processes as well as issues such as pension reform, the wage bill and the PA's budget process. The benchmarks require that the PA submit its annual financial statements to the Palestinian Legislative Council and be independently audited. This is intended to ensure the legitimate use of PA resources and that UK taxpayers' funds achieve value for money. The terms governing the Trust Fund are set out accordingly in signed memoranda of understanding between DFID and the World Bank and between the World Bank and the PA. There is no evidence to suggest that Reform Trust Fund money has been diverted to private bank accounts, or been used to support terrorism.

Other assistance to the Palestinians is provided though the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for refugees and a number of smaller projects. Where projects involve the transfer of funds to a Palestinian agency, there is always a signed agreement with that agency on what funding may be used for. Furthermore, financial reports are submitted as part of a careful monitoring process designed to ensure the legitimate use of taxpayers' money. The UK government will not allow development aid to be used for anything other than poverty reduction.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of UK funding for the Palestinian Territories for 2005–06 has been disbursed; and if he will make a statement. [59904]

Hilary Benn: I have been asked to reply.

DFID's allocation for aid to the Palestinians in the financial year 2005–06 is £30 million. We expect to have disbursed 99 per cent. of this allocation by the end of the financial year. Our assistance comprises:

£15 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees;

£15 million for bilateral assistance to the Palestinians, including £10 million direct budget support to the Palestinian Authority with the remaining for projects supporting institution building and reform, negotiations capacity and in the water sector.

Prism

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006 to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South, *Official Report*, column 1909W, on Prism, which posts he referred to when he indicated that a concerted effort to improve on Prism's poor performance was beginning to pay dividends for a significant number of posts; and if he will make a statement. [60880]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Prism posts communicate using landlines (67 posts) or satellite links (112 posts). Changes to the FCO's IT infrastructure improved the speed and consistency of performance at most landline posts in September 2005. These changes did not improve the performance at posts using satellite communications to the same degree. Therefore other measures are being considered. Following successful tests at a small number of posts we are considering:

transferring posts to landlines, where possible. Initial pilots have been conducted successfully at two posts, Warsaw and Budapest. Further pilots are planned at another seven posts this month: Ankara, Brasilia, Bucharest, Islamabad, Nairobi, New Delhi, Nicosia and Santiago. This change could be applied to 56 posts;

installing hardware to accelerate communications over satellite links, where it is not possible for a post to migrate to a landline. Pilots are underway at five posts: Abuja, Accra, Pretoria, Lagos and Tehran.

In parallel, ways of improving the speed of the Prism system itself are being pursued. System memory has recently been increased, allowing more users to use the system concurrently. Changes to balance the processing load across the system have also been implemented. And more powerful servers will be installed shortly.

Prism performance, and that of the underpinning IT infrastructure remains a high priority for the FCO Board and an area where continuous improvement is being sought.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006 to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South, *Official Report*, column 1909W, on Prism, which posts will be the hub and spoke pilots for Prism during the financial year 2006–07; and if he will make a statement. [60881]

Mr. Straw: Hub and spoke pilots for Prism will be carried out in Spain and Italy. Our embassy in Madrid will be a hub for Alicante, Barcelona, Bilbao, Ibiza, Las Palmas, Malaga, Palma, Seville and Tenerife. Our embassy in Rome will serve Florence, Milan and Naples.

Our embassy in Washington is already acting as a hub, providing some 'shared services' to other posts in the US. Planning is underway to develop this initiative further during financial year 2006–07.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Prism IT system's configuration problems affecting posts in South Asia and Russia/Central Asia; which posts are affected; for what reasons; whether compensation will be sought from the supplier; how it is intended that each post affected will close their accounts by 31 March; and if he will make a statement. [59456]

Mr. Straw: All changes to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) organisation must be reflected in the Prism software. Data defining how the posts in South Asia and Russia/Central Asia Directorates should operate were originally programmed incorrectly in Prism. This was revealed when the posts went 'live' on Prism between 7 and 9 February. The posts could not access their suppliers or approve purchases, so they could not buy goods or services using Prism. Software 'rules' granting access to some accounting processes were also wrong. These problems stopped posts using Prism: it took until 22 February to resolve them fully.

The posts affected were Chennai, Colombo, Dhaka, Islamabad, Kabul, Karachi, Kathmandu, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, Almaty, Ashgabat, Baku, Dushanbe, Ekaterinburg, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tashkent, Tblisi and Yerevan.

To protect the FCO's financial year 2005–06 account closure and alleviate pressure on staff at these posts, they were asked to return their accounts on spreadsheets, rather than on Prism, until 31 March. These spreadsheets are loaded into Prism in the UK. Most of the posts will now go live on Prism in April.

An investigation has been initiated into how these configuration problems arose, and how the issues were resolved subsequently.

Ramallah Agreement

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place a copy of the Ramallah Agreement in the Library. [59604]

Mr. Straw: A copy of the Ramallah Agreement was placed in the Library of the House on 15 March. I will send the right hon. Member a copy.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the *(a)* Minni Minawi and *(b)* Abdul Wahid al-Nur factions of the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army. [60598]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary addressed representatives of all the Parties, including both factions of the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army, at the Darfur peace talks in Abuja on 14 February 2006. He pressed the parties to make faster progress, to implement the cease-fire and called for the leaders of all the movements to attend the talks.

Following my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's speech, Minni Minnawi returned to the talks on 22 February, and the leader of the Justice and Equality Movement, Dr Khalil Ibrahim, arrived on 12 March. This was the first time all three leaders had all been in Abuja since June 2005. Our Special Representative to the talks in Abuja, Dr Rod Pullen, regularly meets the representatives of all the parties to urge them to move rapidly towards a political settlement.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has received on the government in Khartoum's approach to *(a)* the extension of the African Union mission and *(b)* the deployment of a UN mission in Darfur. [60599]

Ian Pearson: On 10 March 2006, the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) decided to extend the mandate of its mission in Darfur (AMIS) to 30 September 2006, and to support in principle the transition of AMIS to the UN.

On 12 March, the Government of Sudan welcomed the decision to extend the AMIS mandate, and announced it was setting up a committee to examine the PSC's report in full. However, in recent interviews Vice President Taha has noted his opposition to UN deployment in Darfur.

We have made clear to the Government of Sudan that we expect them to co-operate with the existing AMIS mission, and with the transition to a UN force. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development underlined this point during his recent visit to Khartoum. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, reiterated this to the Sudanese Foreign Minister when he visited London last month. We will sustain this pressure.

Syria

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) of 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1397W, on Syria, what developments there have been in the trial of Dr. Kamal al-Labwani in Syria; and whether further representations have been made by UK officials to the Government of Syria regarding his fair and proper treatment. [59843]

Mr. Straw: There have been no developments in the trial of Dr. Labwani, nor has the UK made any further representations to the Government of Syria since my hon. Friend the Minister for the Middle East gave the answer to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) on 7 December 2005 *Official Report*, column 1397W. We will continue to monitor developments in Dr. Labwani's case closely and are discussing with our European colleagues how to take forward representations on this issue.

HEALTH

Acinetobacter Infections

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of infection with the bacteria *Acinetobacter* were reported in the NHS in Wales in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005; and what the most recent data is which she has collected on the reported number of infections in England and Wales in 2005. [60475]

Jane Kennedy: The Health Protection Agency's centre for infections receives reports of *Acinetobacter* species blood stream infections (bacteraemias) that are voluntarily reported by microbiology laboratories in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The number of *Acinetobacter* species bacteraemias reported in Wales for 2004 and 2005 is 39 and 24 respectively.

The number of reports for England in 2005 is 1,015. However, figures for 2005 are expected to rise due to late reporting. We expect these to be published in the autumn.

Barts/Broomfield Hospitals (PFI)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reasons *(a)* the St. Bartholomews' private finance initiative (PFI) scheme has been approved and *(b)* the Broomfield Hospital PFI scheme has not yet received approval; and what the effect was of the recent ruling by the Treasury on each scheme; [60752]

(2) when she expects a decision to be taken on approval of the Broomfield Hospital private finance initiative scheme; [60753]

(3) what the estimated total extra costs incurred per month are of the delay in approving the Broomfield Hospital private finance initiative scheme; and if she will make a statement. [60754]

Jane Kennedy: We announced on 26 January 2006 that all trusts would need to confirm their capital investment plans through a reappraisal process, including where applicable private finance initiative (PFI) schemes. The aim of this process is to ensure that all schemes properly take account of the current reforms to the national health service such as choice, a movement of services into primary and community settings, the new financial regime as well as long-term affordability, assumptions on efficiency gains and income growth.

The PFI scheme at Barts and the London NHS Trust was very close to financial close when this announcement was made, and indeed had already been the subject of close scrutiny in the weeks before the announcement. As a result of further discussions between the Department and the trust and their private sector partners the original plans were revised and have formed an addendum to the full business case (FBC).

Departmental officials will shortly be writing to all trusts with PFI schemes letting them know how the reappraisal process will work. Schemes such as the one at the Mid-Essex Hospital Trust, which are closer to financial close, will be focused on first. The trust may incur some additional costs in carrying out this work, but this will be more than offset by the savings which will be realised by the reappraisal exercise.

Birkdale Clinic (Daventry)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the circumstances were in which operations scheduled with the Birkdale Clinic in Daventry after 28 February were cancelled and the clinic's ongoing contract with the NHS terminated; and if she will make a statement. [60272]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In February 2006, the Daventry and South Northants Primary Care Trust, the national health service sponsor of the NHS Treatment Centre, supported by the Department and the Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority, served a notice of termination on the grounds that Birkdale Clinic (Rotherham) Ltd., the provider, had not secured the necessary Healthcare Commission registration for endoscopic procedures.

Birkdale Clinic disputed the allegation that it did not have the necessary registration and disputed any right to terminate the contract on those grounds. However, the parties have agreed that the contract should end on 28 February. The parties are cooperating to ensure that there is no, or minimal, impact for patients arising from the end of the contract.

Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) who is responsible for providing testing kits as part of the introduction of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme; [60799]

(2) how many testing kits have been *(a)* ordered, *(b)* manufactured and *(c)* distributed in readiness for the rollout of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme from 1 April 2006; [60800]

(3) if she will list the programme hub and testing centres commissioned by NHS Cancer Screening Programmes in readiness for the implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme; [60801]

(4) what preparations have been made to invite men and women aged 60 to 69 years to be screened for bowel cancer following the implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. [60802]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have stated their commitment to a National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. On 30 January 2006, the new Health White Paper, "Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services" reaffirmed that the programme will be rolled out from April 2006. Departmental budgets for 2006–07 are currently under consideration by Ministers, and resolution is expected by the end of March 2006.

Five programme hubs across England will invite men and women to participate in the screening programme, send out the faecal occult blood (FOB) testing kits, interpret kits and send results out. 90 to 100 local screening centres will provide endoscopy services for the 2 per cent. of men and women who have a positive FOB test result.

NHS Cancer Screening Programmes are currently assessing where the five programme hubs will be located. The English bowel cancer screening pilot site at the Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby, Warwickshire, is expected to become the first programme hub when national roll-out begins. It is hoped to establish the other four programme hubs by March 2007, with announcements to be made in due course.

NHS Cancer Screening Programmes are taking all the necessary action to ensure that successful roll-out of the programme, including the procurement of testing kits. Following a formal tendering exercise, a preferred provider of the testing kits has been selected. An order will be placed for the delivery of the kits in time for the commencement of the programme.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the policy of *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the NHS regarding the sourcing of goods from Burma. [52217]

Jane Kennedy: The Department's policy on the procurement of goods and services is based on value for money, having due regard to propriety and regularity and ensuring full compliance with the European Union public procurement directive and other regulatory requirements. The directive promotes equal treatment, transparency and competitive procurement as well as prohibiting discrimination on grounds of nationality.

Counterfeit Medicines

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* prevalence and *(b)* effects on health care of (i) counterfeit Lipitor and (ii) other counterfeit medicines. [57516]

Jane Kennedy: There have been three reported incidents of counterfeit medicines having reached patients through the United Kingdom pharmaceutical supply chain via prescription since 1994. Over 650 million prescriptions are written annually in the UK. Therefore the risk of receiving a counterfeit medicine through the regulated pharmaceutical supply chain in the UK is low.

However, there is evidence of counterfeit medicines being obtained by customers in the UK via the internet, by mail order or on a personal basis. The vast majority of these instances are from websites or organisations based in other countries and are mainly lifestyle products used to treat erectile dysfunction, obesity and hair-loss. Products purchased in this way cannot be guaranteed for their safety, quality and efficacy. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) investigates such websites or related persons/organisations based in the UK and refers details of overseas equivalents to respective international counterparts.

Following the detection of counterfeit Lipitor tablets (20milligram Lot 004405K1) in the legitimate UK pharmaceutical supply chain in July 2005, the counterfeit tablets were analysed by the manufacturer (Pfizer) and the MHRA laboratory. The analysed tablets contained Lovastatin which is a different active ingredient to Lipitor's Atorvastatin but has similar actions in vivo. The medical risks and benefits were reviewed by physicians in the MHRA and Pfizer who both independently agreed that a class two recall was appropriate because there was assessed to be no immediate danger to patients. The MHRA issued the recall for this medicine on 28 July 2005 which covered both counterfeit material and genuine material which shared a common batch number.

Counterfeit medicines which are discovered in the legitimate UK pharmaceutical supply chain are analysed to establish the identity and amount of any active ingredients present. A medical evaluation of the risks to patients is undertaken which determines the level of recall to be conducted for the medicine. The absence of active ingredient, reduced potency, hyperpotency and/or incorrect active ingredient in suspected and determined counterfeits as well as an analysis of the length and type of treatment contribute to this risk assessment process.

Dentistry

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether dentists who do not sign the general dental services contract will be able to provide free dental treatment for school-age NHS patients. [58988]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* From 1 April 2006, a general dental practitioner who has not signed a new general dental services contract or new personal dental services agreement will not be able to provide national health service treatment.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* assumptions, *(b)* estimates and *(c)* trends were used in forecasting an average annual income for a dentist under the new personal dental services contract of (i) £80,000 fees and (ii) £80,000 expenses; and what steps she took to validate this forecast. [59671]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* Most dentists who provide national health service primary dental care services are not paid on a salaried basis, but through a system of NHS fees and other payments that go towards the costs of running a dental practice as well as the dentist's net income.

These estimates of average net income and expenses for a committed NHS dentist are based on data for dentists in the general dental services (GDS). The historical estimates of average earnings and expenses for GDS dentists are calculated by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, based on data on gross fees and payments from the Dental Practice Board (DPB) and data from HM Revenue and Customs on expenses.

DPB payment data show that on average, a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment in 2004–05 in the GDS received gross GDS income of about £154,350. Dentists with a reasonable commitment are defined as those with gross fee earnings of £59,100 or more. These averages covered some 7,640 GDS principal dentists who worked throughout the year 2004–05.

HM Revenue and Customs information from dentists' tax returns show that the average ratio of expenses to gross earnings for a highly committed NHS dentist is around 52 per cent. (2003–04 tax year). The same source gives average net income of a highly committed NHS dentist from all sources as £78,600 in the tax year 2003–04. Average expenses were about £85,200. This information is taken from the tax returns of 392 GDS principal dentists who were in non-associate business arrangements for whom the tax year ended between January and March 2004.

Based on the data from these sources, the Department estimates that a highly committed GDS dentist earns an average NHS income of around £80,000 in 2005–06. We do not have equivalent data for personal dental services (PDS) dentists, but there are no reasons for supposing any significant difference in average earnings.

GDS dentists are being offered new contracts which guarantee their earnings in the reference period, October 2004 to September 2005, provided their activity as expressed in units of dental activity (UDAs) is 95 per cent. of its level during this reference period. PDS providers are entitled to new PDS agreements (or GDS contracts) based on their current contract values.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on NHS general dental services in Lancashire in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms in each of the last five years. [60798]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The main element of national health service dental services are the primary dental care services provided by dentists working within the general dental service (GDS), or personal dental service (PDS) pilots. The following tables display the readily available data on expenditure on these services for primary care trusts in the Lancashire area and for the Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority (SHA). The difference between gross and net expenditure is the contribution to costs from dental charges collected directly from patients. Note that data on PDS expenditure are only available for the financial year 2004–05.

Core GDS and PDS dental payments [1, 2, 3, 4]

					£ million, cash terms[5]
	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Blackburn with Darwen					
Gross GDS payments	4.372	4.637	4.981	5.289	4.915
Net GDS payments	3.128	3.374	3.644	4.068	3.966
Gross GDS and PDS payments	4.372	4.637	4.981	5.289	5.372
Net GDS and PDS payments	3.128	3.374	3.644	4.068	4.378
Blackpool					
Gross GDS payments	5.539	5.676	5.651	5.745	4.340
Net GDS payments	4.026	4.091	4.030	4.115	3.089
Gross GDS and PDS payments	5.539	5.676	5.651	5.745	5.726
Net GDS and PDS payments	4.026	4.091	4.030	4.115	4.297
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale					
Gross GDS payments	6.837	6.244	6.104	6.594	4.784
Net GDS payments	4.827	4.463	4.311	4.547	3.496
Gross GDS and PDS payments	6.837	6.244	6.104	6.594	7.031
Net GDS and PDS payments	4.827	4.463	4.311	4.547	5.434
Chorley and South Ribble					
Gross GDS payments	5.142	5.616	5.795	5.929	5.957
Net GDS payments	3.419	3.695	3.798	3.936	4.034
Gross GDS and PDS payments	5.142	5.616	5.795	5.929	6.748
Net GDS and PDS payments	3.419	3.695	3.798	3.936	4.728
Fylde					
Gross GDS payments	2.409	2.495	2.628	2.679	2.652
Net GDS payments	1.492	1.547	1.631	1.642	1.703
Gross GDS and PDS payments	2.409	2.495	2.628	2.679	3.360
Net GDS and PDS payments	1.492	1.547	1.631	1.642	2.305
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley					
Gross GDS payments	2.983	3.085	3.212	3.252	2.244
Net GDS payments	2.076	2.144	2.231	2.290	1.691
Gross GDS and PDS payments	2,983	3.085	3.212	3.252	3.228
Net GDS and PDS payments	2.076	2.144	2.231	2.290	2.544
Morecambe Bay					
Gross GDS payments	8.983	9.642	9.767	9.799	9.260
Net GDS payments	5.667	6.081	6.180	6.331	6.140
Gross GDS and PDS payments	8.983	9.642	9.767	9.799	10.824
Net GDS and PDS payments	5.667	6.081	6.180	6.331	7.519
Preston					
Gross GDS payments	4.725	4.655	4.623	5.034	5.061
Net GDS payments	3.494	3.432	3.371	3.648	3.762
Gross GDS and PDS payments	4.725	4.655	4.623	5.034	5.275
Net GDS and PDS payments	3.494	3.432	3.371	3.648	3.955

Core GDS and PDS dental payments [1, 2, 3, 4]

				£ million, cash terms[5]	
	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
West Lancashire					
Gross GDS payments	3.691	3.922	4.127	4.583	3.844
Net GDS payments	2.654	2.820	3.003	3.381	3.044
Gross GDS and PDS payments	3.691	3.922	4.127	4.583	5.580
Net GDS and PDS payments	2.654	2.820	3.003	3.381	4.511
Wyre					
Gross GDS payments	3.620	3.784	3.970	3.783	2.813
Net GDS payments	2.319	2.412	2.519	2.416	1.810
Gross GDS and PDS payments	3.620	3.784	3.970	3.783	4.511
Net GDS and PDS payments	2.319	2.412	2.519	2.416	3.250

Core GDS and PDS dental payments [1, 2, 3, 4]

				£ million, real terms[5]	
	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Blackburn with Darwen					
Gross GDS payments	4.846	5.015	5222	5.402	4.919
Net GDS payments	3.467	3.650	3.820	4.155	3.966
Gross GDS and PDS payments	4.846	5.015	5.222	5.402	5.372
Net GDS and PDS payments	3.467	3.650	3.820	4.155	4.378
Blackpool					
Gross GDS payments	6.139	6.140	5.924	5.867	4.340
Net GDS payments	4.462	4.425	4.225	4.203	3.089
Gross GDS and PDS payments	6.139	6.140	5.924	5.867	5.726
Net GDS and PDS payments	4.462	4.425	4.225	4.203	4.297
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale					
Gross GDS payments	7.578	6.753	6.399	6.735	4.784
Net GDS payments	5.350	4.827	4.520	4.644	3.496
Gross GDS and PDS payments	7.578	6.753	6.399	6.735	7.031
Net GDS and PDS payments	5.350	4.827	4.520	4.644	5.434
Chorley and South Ribble					
Gross GDS payments	5.699	6.074	6.076	6.055	5.957
Net GDS payments	3.789	3.996	3.982	4.020	4.034
Gross GDS and PDS payments	5.699	6.074	6.076	6.055	6.748
Net GDS and PDS payments	3.789	3.996	3.982	4.020	4.728
Fylde					
Gross GDS payments	2.670	2.699	2.755	2.736	2.652
Net GDS payments	1.654	1.673	1.710	1.677	1.703
Gross GDS and PDS payments	2.670	2.699	2.755	2.736	3.360
Net GDS and PDS payments	1.654	1.673	1.710	1.677	2.305
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley					
Gross GDS payments	3.306	3.336	3.367	3.322	2.244
Net GDS payments	2.301	2.319	2.339	2.339	1.691
Gross GDS and PDS payments	3.306	3.336	3.367	3.322	3.228
Net GDS and PDS payments	2.301	2.319	2.339	2.339	2.544
Morecambe Bay					
Gross GDS payments	9.956	10.429	10.239	10.008	9.2650
Net GDS payments	6.281	6.578	6.479	6.466	6.140
Gross GDS and PDS payments	9.956	10.429	10.239	10.008	10.824
Net GDS and PDS payments	6.281	6.578	6.479	6.466	7.519
Preston					
Gross GDS payments	5.237	5.035	4.846	5.141	5.061
Net GDS payments	3.872	3.712	3.533	3.726	3.762
Gross GDS and PDS payments	5.237	5.035	4.846	5.141	5.275
Net GDS and PDS payments	3.872	3.712	3.533	3.726	3.955
West Lancashire					
Gross GDS payments	4.090	4.242	4.326	4.681	3.844
Net GDS payments	2.941	3.050	3.148	3.454	3.044
Gross GDS and PDS payments	4.090	4.242	4.326	4.681	5.580
Net GDS and PDS payments	2.941	3.050	3.148	3.454	4.511
Wyre					
Gross GDS payments	4.012	4.093	4.162	3.864	2.813
Net GDS payments	2.570	2.609	2.641	2.467	1.810
Gross GDS and PDS payments	4.012	4.093	4.162	3.864	4.511
Net GDS and PDS payments	2.570	2.609	2.641	2.467	3.250

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Cumbria and Lancashire SHA data, Core GDS and PDS dental payments[1, 2, 3, 4]

					£ million, cash terms[5]
	2000-01	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Gross GDS payments	56.836	58.738	59.800	61.915	54.585
Net GDS payments	38.707	40.006	40.610	42.484	38.556
Gross GDS and PDS payments	56.836	58.738	59.800	61.915	66.567
Net GDS and PDS payments	38.707	40.006	40.610	42.484	48.939

Core GDS and PDS dental payments[1, 2, 3, 4]

					£ million, real terms[5]
	2000-01	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Gross GDS payments	62.995	63.533	62.690	63.236	54.585
Net GDS payments	42.901	43.271	42.573	43.390	38.556
Gross GDS and PDS payments	62.995	63.533	62.690	63.236	66.597
Net GDS and PDS payments	42.901	43.271	42.573	43.390	48.939

[1] Gross GDS payments include adult fees (including item of service and continuing care payments), child fees (including item of service and capitation payments), commitment payments and point of treatment check payment training (in 2001 only), seniority payments, maternity/paternity/adoptive leave payments, long-term sick leave payments, continuing professional development allowances including travel hours, reimbursement of business rates, vocational training grants and clinical audit payments. The following costs are excluded from this data: employer's superannuation costs, vocational trainee salaries and national insurance contribution costs, clinical audit convenors, clinical audit secretarial support costs and travel expenses, and costs associated with any salaried general dental practitioners and emergency dental services.

[2] PDS payment data are included for 2004–05 only and relates to baseline payments or the agreed regular monthly payments made to PDS practices. Reliable PDS data at practice level are not available prior to 2004–05. The data cannot identify the cost of any PDS services that are directly managed by local NHS trusts, such as certain dental access centres.

[3] Payments are assigned to areas on the basis of practice postcode data.

[4] Net payments represent the balance of payments due after taking account of NHS dental charge income collected from patients by dental practices.

5 Figures have been converted into 2004–05 prices using the December 2005 GDP deflator index.

Source:

Primary Care Statistics.

Diabetes

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the efficacy of animal-based insulin as a medication for those with diabetes; and if she will make a statement. [53473]

Jane Kennedy: All animal derived insulins that are licensed as medicinal products in the United Kingdom for human use have been assessed as satisfactory based on the critical parameters of quality, safety and efficacy before being approved.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1306W, on prescribing practice (budget over-runs), whether the representations she has received on the potential impact of local NHS deficits have included representations on occurrences of patients being denied treatments at certain times of the year or month when budgets are likely to over-run. [45419]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has received correspondence relating to financial deficits but it is not possible to analyse in retrospect whether those include individual representations without incurring disproportionate cost.

Drug-related Arrests (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many arrests for drug-related offences have been made in Peterborough constituency in the last 10 years. [49288]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Data on number of arrests for suspected drug-related offences are not collated in the form requested.

The total number of persons arrested for drug offences and other acquisitive offences, a significant proportion of which are likely to be drug-related, in the Cambridgeshire police force area since 1999–2000 is shown in the following table.

Number of persons arrested for recorded crime (notifiable offences) by offence type, Cambridgeshire police force area[1, 2]

						Number
Type of offence	*1999–2000*	*2000-01*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Drug offences	842	735	804	711	646	525
Robbery	266	214	296	250	256	258
Burglary	1,223	1,111	1,162	1,081	1,139	1,155
Theft and handling stolen goods	4,304	4,362	4,429	4,145	4,068	3,983
Fraud and forgery	416	311	316	340	355	305

[1] Information prior to 1999–2000 is not available.

[2] Information for 2005–06 will be available in autumn 2006.

Hospital Referrals

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms are in place to enable primary care trusts to monitor the number of referrals to hospitals by individual *(a)* GPs and *(b)* GP's surgeries; and if she will make a statement. [55291]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not centrally collect the information requested. Mechanisms for monitoring referrals are managed at a local level through primary care trusts working with general practitioners and hospitals.

NHS Operating Framework

John Hemming: *To ask the Secretary of State for* Health what assessment she has made of the implications for *(a)* hospital and *(b)* ward provision of measures arising from the requirement in the NHS operating framework for 2006–07 for all NHS organisations to return a surplus. [59396]

Jane Kennedy: The Department sets minimum standards for all areas of the national health service that must be delivered. There can be no trade-off between meeting these requirements and eliminating deficits. It is for local decision making to determine how much hospital capacity is required locally to achieve these standards and whether progress beyond these standards is possible whilst maintained good financial performance.

NHS Spending

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to tackle the projected overspend in the NHS in the 2005–06 financial year. [59300]

Jane Kennedy: We have made it absolutely clear that deficits and poor financial management in a minority of organisations is not acceptable.

For the organisations with the biggest problems we have sent in financial and management specialists (turnaround teams) to help the organisations address their problems of poor financial management.

We are taking action now with the minority of organisations that are underperforming to ensure that the position improves and financial balance is restored in the national health service by the end of 2006–07.

The turnaround teams will support the NHS in identifying opportunities to deliver services with greater cost-effectiveness and to make financial savings. They will help the local NHS ensure that the NHS delivers both its key targets and financial balance.

Strategic health authorities remain responsible for the performance management of their organisations, but we have imposed a more comprehensive monitoring and performance management regime.

Nurse Assistants

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of changes in the volumes and sources of individual drugs prescribed in hospitals following the commencement in hospitals of the deployment of nurse assistants employed by pharmaceutical companies. [59036]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not collect data centrally relating to the volumes, sources of individual drugs prescribed in hospitals, nor the type of clinician who prescribed the medicine. However, in 2004–05 the Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) drugs bill spend, which covers expenditure by hospitals on drugs and medical gases, was an estimated £2.6 billion, an increase of 14 per cent. on 2003–04.

The Department has issued guidance "HSG(93)5 Standards of Business Conduct for NHS Staff and Commercial Sponsorship—Ethical Standards for the NHS" that requires the national health service employers to satisfy themselves that sponsorship arrangements are properly conducted and are in the best interests of the NHS. In addition, clinicians are required to comply with professional guidance. The Nursing and Midwifery Council code of professional conduct: standards for conduct, performance and ethics particularly advises that wherever nurses work, are required to adhere to their code of conduct. Specifically, it states they must

> 'ensure their registration status is not used in the promotion of commercial products or services and ensure professional judgment is not influenced by any commercial considerations'.

In 2003, the Department issued a medicines management framework to the NHS trusts to support the development of good practice standards in medicines management. The framework specifically addresses the need for trusts to have written policies for all relevant staff members to ensure high standards of probity and business conduct, including working with pharmaceutical industry representatives.

The Healthcare Commission is currently carrying out an acute hospital portfolio medicines management review. The review will consider a number of aspects of medicines management and investigate the corporate governance structures that are supporting medicines management which will include management of budgets and expenditure. The outcome of this review is expected to be available in summer 2006.

Over-the-Counter Medicines

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applications received by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Agency for the validation of over the counter medicines are outstanding; and if she will make a statement. [58655]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The total number of applications outstanding with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Agency (MHRA) for new product licences for over-the-counter medicines (on 13 March 2006) was 347. These represent approximately 12 per cent. of the total number of product licence applications undergoing assessment in the MHRA.

Prescriptions (Pre-payment Certificates)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pre-payment certificates for prescriptions have been issued in London in each of the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [60558]

Jane Kennedy: Information on the number of prepayment certificates (PPCs) issued for London is not separately identifiable. However, the number of PPCs issued for England, by month for each of the last 12 months is as follows:

	Number
2005	
March	127,400
April	84,821
May	90,624
June	97,744
July	88,624
August	92,221
September	93,500
October	92,922
November	97,131
December	78,487
2006	
January	102,945
February	96,312

Purified Protein Derivative

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 993W, on purified protein derivative, when she expects data which would demonstrate the safety, quality and efficacy of the purified protein derivative used in Mantoux skin testing to be submitted to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for its consideration; and what representations she has received on this matter. [57444]

Jane Kennedy: It would be for the applicant to consider when to submit an application for a marketing authorisation if sufficient data to demonstrate quality, safety and efficacy of the product are available.

There is currently no pending marketing authorisation application with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for a purified protein derivative for Mantoux testing.

The Department has received representations on issues surrounding Mantoux and Ministers have dealt with a number of letters and parliamentary question 39325.

South-west London SHA

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the strategic health authority for South West London has been instructed that the health economy within its jurisdiction must balance its budget for 2005–06. [57120]

Jane Kennedy: All national health service organisations are expected to plan for and achieve financial balance.

Strategic health authorities (SHAs) are responsible for delivering overall financial balance for their local health economy. However, the month six, forecast for South West London SHA's overall economy at year-end suggests that financial balance is not going to be achieved this year.

At this late stage in the financial year, we would expect the SHA to take all reasonable actions to improve the financial position.

Telephone and Entertainment Systems

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the NHS Trusts at which *(a)* Patientline and *(b)* other private service providers provide telephone and entertainment systems. [60200]

Jane Kennedy: The bedside entertainment systems are currently being provided by four service providers. They have an operational system in the national health service trusts listed as follows:

Hospital Telephone Services (HTS)

Ashford and Peter's NHS Trust
Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Bedford Hospitals NHS Trust
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust
Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust
King's College Hospital NHS Trust
Medway NHS Trust
Milton Keynes General Hospital NHS Trust
Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust
West Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust
Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust

Patientline

Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust
Barts and the London NHS Trust
Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust
Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust
Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust
Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust (Huddersfield Royal Infirmary)
Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals NHS Trust
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust
Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Christie Hospital NHS Trust
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust
East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust
Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust
Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Good Hope Hospital NHS Trust
Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
The Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust
Kings Lynn and Wisbech Hospitals NHS Trust
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Trust
Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust
The Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust
Mid Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust
North Bristol NHS Trust
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust
North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
North Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust
North West London Hospital NHS Trust
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust
Nottingham City Hospital NHS Trust
Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS trust
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Poole Hospital NHS Trust
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust
Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust
Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust
The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust
The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust
Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust
Salisbury Healthcare NHS Trust
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
South Manchester University Hospitals NHS Trust
South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust
South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust
St .Mary's NHS Trust
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Swindon and Marlborough NHS Trust
Taunton and Somerset Hospital NHS Trust
The Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust
The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust
The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust
Trafford Healthcare NHS Trust
United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust
University College London NHS Foundation Trust
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
West Dorset General Hospitals NHS Trust
Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust
Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust
York Hospitals NHS Trust

Premier Managed Payphones

Birmingham Women's Healthcare NHS Trust
Cheshire and Wirral Partnerships NHS Trust
Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust
South Devon NHS Trust
South Warwickshire General Hospitals NHS Trust
Southend Hospitals NHS Trust
The Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust
United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust
University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust
Wirral Hospitals NHS Trust

Wandsworth Group

Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust
Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Trust
Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust (Calderdale Royal Hospital)
Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust
Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust
Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
The Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery
Weston Area Health NHS Trust

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department has issued on the provision of premium telephone and entertainment systems to patients; and what advice about costs and alternatives patients are given. [60202]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not issued guidance to patients on the provision of the bedside entertainment systems. These systems are run by private providers and offer additional services for the patient. Patients who wish to use the services are made aware of the charges at the time they sign up to use the system and by literature posted around the hospital.

Hospital payphones and televisions in day rooms are available for patients who do not wish to use the service.

Temozolomide

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will instruct the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence urgently to re-examine the efficacy of the brain tumour drug temozolomide. [57684]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently appraising temozolomide for the treatment of high grade gliomas. NICE expects to publish final guidance to the national health service in August 2006. Further information is available from NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average cost of a course of the brain tumour drug temozolomide; and what assessment has been made of the drug's efficacy. [57729]

Jane Kennedy: As stated in the September 2005 edition of the British National Formulary, the cost of temozolomide is as follows: £17.50 for five 5mg tablets, £69.20 for five 20mg tablets. £346 for five 100mg tablets and £865 for five 250mg tablets, excluding VAT.

We are unable to provide an average cost of a course of the brain tumour drug temozolomide. Treatment costs will vary depending on individual circumstances and in different settings because of negotiated procurement discounts.

I understand that temozolomide was assessed for quality, safety and efficacy within a Europe-wide authorisation procedure.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Penalty Notices (Alcohol)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for *(a)* consumption of alcohol by and *(b)* selling alcohol to under age people by (i) Middlesbrough council and (ii) Redcar and Cleveland council in the last 12 months. [59739]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to identify the number of penalty notices for disorder issued in Middlesbrough council and Redcar and Cleveland council areas because centrally available data are for police force areas and are not broken down to that level of detail.

Antisocial Behaviour

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he *(a)* is taking to and *(b)* plans to take to tackle anti-social behaviour outside nightclubs and public houses in West Lancashire; and if he will make a statement; [58515]

(2) how much was provided to West Lancashire District Council to tackle antisocial behaviour in the last year for which figures are available. [58516]

Hazel Blears: Tackling antisocial behaviour is a cross-departmental issue and many Government Departments contribute to this agenda. A wide range of funding streams across Government have a positive impact on tackling anti-social behaviour. For example, Neighbourhood Renewal programmes which focus on the most deprived areas give practitioners and local communities a real opportunity to turn their neighbourhoods around; DFES through their work on schools and parenting contribute to preventing problems escalating and ensuring families get the support they need; DEFRA and their work in tackling litter and fly tipping which can often blight neighbourhoods where antisocial behaviour and crime can take hold; and DCMS who provide the opportunity to divert young people from destructive and damaging involvement in antisocial behaviour. The DCA also contributes to ensure a swift and effective criminal justice system for dealing with the perpetrators of antisocial behaviour.

In 2005–06 the Home Office has allocated25,000 to every Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in both England and Wales, including West Lancashire to tackle antisocial behaviour. This amounts to £9.4 million per annum and forms part of the Safer, Stronger Communities Fund.

The Government are determined to target those individuals involved in alcohol related disorder in our towns and cities. We have recently undertaken our third Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC) to crack down on such behaviour. Southern Lancashire Basic Command Unit which covers West Lancashire received an extra £10,000 of Home Office funding as part of this campaign. Overall during the campaign police and trading standard officers carried out over 6,000 test purchase operations, dealt with more than 30,000 offences and made over 25,000 arrests. The police work that led to the success of AMEC will now continue on a daily basis as part of everyday mainstream police activities. We have also introduced a range of new powers through the Licensing Act 2003 to deal with the problems of alcohol misuse. In addition, the Violent Crime Reduction Bill will introduce a new civil order- a Drinking Banning Order, which will allow for the exclusion from the area concerned of individuals aged 16 or over who are responsible for alcohol-related disorder.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what percentage of the total number of antisocial behaviour orders granted in England have been issued to *(a)* men, *(b)* women, *(c)* people aged under 21 and *(d)* people aged under 18; [59016]

(2) how many people in Swindon have been found to be in breach of antisocial behaviour orders; and how many were given custodial sentences as a result. [59017]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been available to the courts since one April 1999. From commencement up to 31 May 2000 data were collected on aggregate numbers only. Since 1 June 2000, from copies of orders received, we are able to determine the sex and age of ASBO recipients. In England, of the total number of ASBOs issued from 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2005 (latest available), 87 per cent. have been issued to men, 13 per cent. to women, 59 per cent. to people aged under 21 and 44 per cent. to those aged under 18.

ASBO breach data are currently available from one June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since 1 June 2000. The data are available at Criminal Justice System area level only. During this period three people in Wiltshire breached their ASBO on one or more occasions, two of whom received a custodial sentence.

Cannabis

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government policy on cannabis is informed by the view that cannabis is a gateway to harder drugs; and if he will make a statement. [54068]

Paul Goggins: Government policy on the classification of cannabis is informed by the work of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, and their two comprehensive reports on the subject in 2002 and 2005. While their most recent report (2005) does not address specifically the issue of cannabis being a gateway to "harder" drugs, they fully considered this issue in their earlier report.

They concluded that proving a causal link between cannabis use and the use of other drugs was extremely difficult. They advised that other important factors, such as the personality of the user and their social environment, were extremely important. They highlighted the fact that the evidence shows that the majority of cannabis users never in fact move on to Class A drugs.

The ACMD continue to monitor the situation closely. If new evidence was produced to change their view they would, of course, advise the Government accordingly.

Charities Bill

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the number of exempt charities of each class which would cease to be exempt under the proposals in the Charities Bill; and how many of each class would become exempted. [54867]

Paul Goggins: We estimate that around 10,000 exempt charities in England and Wales would be affected by the current proposals. Of these, we estimate that around 7,800 would have to register with the Charity Commission and around 1,000 would become excepted from the requirement to register as their annual income would be below 100,000. The remaining group of around 1,200 would retain exempt status but be regulated by a separate Principal Regulator.

We do not have detailed estimates by class of charity. However we believe that approximately 7,000 Voluntary Schools and 800 charitable Industrial and Provident Societies and Registered Friendly Societies would account for the vast majority of those charities that would lose exempt status under the proposals in the Charities Bill, and be required to register with the Charity Commission.

Chapter 4 of the Regulatory Impact Assessment accompanying the Charities Bill provides more information about the proposals relating to exempt charities.

Children in Custody

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006 to question 47527, on children in custody, if he will make it his policy to record the numbers of children held in penal custody who had *(a)* some form of mental health problem, *(b)* a history of having been in care, *(c)* literacy levels below the average for their age, *(d)* reported experience of violence at home, *(e)* reported suffering from sexual abuse and *(f)* not accessed educational provision prior to custody. [60307]

Fiona Mactaggart: These details are already recorded, for example in the trainee's ASSET form, but are not collated centrally. Individual information is needed in relation to each trainee; but an overall picture can be obtained from research studies based on samples of trainees. Mental health data obtained by this method is included in the Youth Justice Board's 2005 publication "Mental health needs and provision" and data on literacy and school attendance in its 2001 survey "An audit of education provision within the juvenile secure estate". These studies are available on the Board's website (www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk). New research on school attendance is currently in hand. The development of electronic systems within the youth justice system should make it possible to collate a larger amount of information than can readily be done at present.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 10th January 2006 on behalf of Mrs. Gladise Masero, Home Office Reference M1087704. [59407]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 17 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 9 November 2005 regarding (acknowledgement B26843/5) on behalf of Rajinder Kumar, K501739. [59444]

Mr. McNulty: The Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 March.

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply in full to the letters from the hon. Member for Richmond Park dated 1 and 14 December 2005 and 1 February 2006 regarding the immigration case of Mr. Hakim Shena Suleyman (Home Office Reference: H421951). [59483]

Mr. McNulty: The Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the hon. Member on 16 March.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 9 November 2005 (acknowledgement B26882/5) on behalf of Mrs. Zohra Kousar Pak, HO ref. K12009973. [59486]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 20 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 21 December 2005 (acknowledgement B30471/5) on behalf of Mohammed Ubaidul Hassan Ludhi, HO ref. LR15170033181/1. [59487]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 17 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 25 October 2005 (acknowledgement B25206/5) regarding HO Ref G1071997, Mr Sabir Ghazi. [59488]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 20 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 28 November 2005 (acknowledgement B28213/5) on behalf of Mauvalyn Howell, HO Ref A2329027. [59489]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 17 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 6 December 2005 (acknowledgement B29131/5) on behalf of Miss Lethiana Corrodas, HO ref.C1019853. [59490]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 20 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the enquiry from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 4 October 2005 (acknowledgement reference B23510/5) on behalf of Dionne Peast, Home Office reference P363945. [59905]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 20 March 2006.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the recorded incidence was of *(a)* violent crime and *(b)* serious violent crime in each month from January 2003 (i) in total and (ii) broken down by police authority area. [58177]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the tables. Data are provided for violent crime which combines offence groups' violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery. Figures are also provided for more serious violence against the person, a subset of violence against the person.

Violent crime January 2003 to March 2005

	2003											
Police force	*Jan*	*Feb*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug*	*Sept*	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec*
Avon and Somerset	2,273	1,966	2,561	2,179	2,326	2,693	2,842	2,614	2,987	2,709	2,140	2,546
Bedfordshire	832	735	822	837	828	967	884	796	881	883	842	818
Cambridgeshire	1,029	944	1,184	1,132	1,193	1,455	1492	1,434	1,324	1,215	1,160	1,218
Cheshire	1,090	982	1,172	1,265	1,259	1,256	1,364	1,154	1,287	1,444	1,261	1,333
Cleveland	663	756	864	819	874	906	948	1,001	928	1,074	987	921
Cumbria	566	484	499	495	599	564	708	478	711	553	530	557
Derbyshire	1,375	1,306	1,493	1,459	1,538	1,563	1,496	1,727	1,605	1,697	1,389	1,482
Devon and Cornwall	1,859	1,634	2,080	1,955	2,198	2,258	2,571	2,750	2,254	2,405	2,242	2,308
Dorset	701	681	825	844	863	777	980	821	872	872	841	818
Durham	672	697	761	631	615	664	6561	655	583	543	509	526
Dyfed-Powys	481	480	534	477	500	669	840	860	748	754	827	553
Essex	1,924	2,031	2,051	2,216	2,325	2,585	2,539	2,406	2,271	2,569	2,312	2,384
Gloucestershire	784	697	825	710	803	821	882	908	763	741	701	685
Greater Manchester	4,902	4,946	5,554	5,650	5,430	6,052	5,632	5,650	5,702	5,174	5,110	5,557
Gwent	1,312	1,196	1,192	1,326	1,127	906	1,348	1,207	1,284	1,199	965	903
Hampshire	2,362	2,332	2,779	2,392	2,768	2,902	3,435	3,350	3,162	3,366	3,285	3,312
Hertfordshire	707	710	850	918	991	1,092	1,191	1,192	1,003	1,182	1,124	1,179
Humberside	1,446	1473	1902	1651	2095	2,028	2,236	2,425	2,609	2,707	2,526	2,410
Kent	1,727	1,540	1,783	1,741	1,831	1,954	1,970	2,107	1,944	1,937	1,862	1,764
Lancashire	1,404	1,344	1,737	2,022	2,682	2,883	2,832	2,538	2,247	2,259	2,285	2,431
Leicestershire	1,462	1,396	1,546	1,455	1,630	1,722	1,721	1,782	1,660	1,722	1,746	1,549
Lincolnshire	767	666	872	826	893	871	1,048	1,019	897	896	849	899
London, City of	96	86	89	73	62	59	96	92	62	67	83	84
Merseyside	2,202	2,001	2,413	2,314	2,466	2,441	2,408	2,634	2,257	2,297	2,189	2,661
Metropolitan Police	18,606	17,199	19,631	19,172	20,326	21,144	21,555	20,299	19,514	19,238	18,720	17,867
Norfolk	835	827	1,013	987	1,083	1,122	1,184	1,183	1,052	991	1,060	988
Northamptonshire	841	767	955	960	1,074	1,051	1,057	1,006	1,010	1,118	1,106	1,101
Northumbria	2,373	2341	2,477	2389	2,502	2,477	2,444	2,299	2,196	2,148	2,117	2,124
North Wales	966	903	1,080	968	989	992	1,091	1,066	919	892	912	954
North Yorkshire	834	586	857	491	862	762	869	805	1,032	1,016	683	917
Nottinghamshire	1,561	1569	2,035	1,693	1,860	2,089	1,948	1,997	1,788	1,786	1,795	1,781
South Wales	2,069	1,790	1,949	1,814	1,839	1,963	2,032	2,169	1,830	1,895	1,896	1,862
South Yorkshire	1,330	1,357	1,362	1,295	1,349	1,286	1,350	1,373	1,271	1,256	1,282	1,474
Staffordshire	1,681	1,755	1,975	1,974	1,971	2,178	2,079	1,896	2,173	2,228	1,949	2,214
Suffolk	727	[illegible]	740	740	850	875	1,012	1,072	979	753	810	859
Surrey	853	686	810	949	1,007	1,013	885	994	777	842	1,015	865

Violent crime January 2003 to March 2005

	2003											
Police force	*Jan*	*Feb*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug*	*Sept*	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec*
Sussex	1,592	1,570	1,699	1,726	1,877	2,021	1,931	2,001	1,839	1,661	1,854	1,670
Thames Valley	2,236	2,103	2,675	2,583	2,566	2,859	2,809	2,851	2,677	2,640	2,475	2,555
Warwickshire	595	602	622	606	759	697	703	718	639	628	572	617
West Mercia	1,810	1,636	1,750	1,846	1,946	2,129	2,099	2,171	1,954	1,877	1,896	1,922
West Midlands	5,327	4,907	5,743	5,564	5,978	6,162	6,097	6,083	5,536	5,609	5,482	5,575
West Yorkshire	3,101	2,730	3,398	3,297	4,258	4,935	5,577	5,390	4,912	4,843	4,857	4,459
Wiltshire	604	611	565	619	574	594	706	628	553	600	541	538
Total	80,577	75,622	87,724	85,060	91,566	96,437	9,9547	97,600	92,692	92,286	88,997	89,240

Violent crime January 2003 to March 2005

	2004											
Police force	*Jan*	*Feb*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*Aug*	*Septr*	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec*
Avon and Somerset	2,670	2,402	2,846	2,650	2,695	3,245	3,099	2,930	3,123	2,723	3,334	3,156
Bedfordshire	843	847	890	888	1,012	1,133	1,109	969	1,002	961	1,037	1,004
Cambridgeshire	1,135	1,155	1,272	1,199	1,374	1,409	1,454	1,489	1,407	1,280	1,222	1,063
Cheshire	1,260	1228	1306	1333	1405	1485	1354	1,323	1,469	1355	1,479	1,537
Cleveland	995	882	946	969	979	995	984	966	1,011	1,091	1,233	1,183
Cumbria	739	625	732	559	761	693	769	418	1,045	905	899	891
Derbyshire	1,450	1,431	1,499	1,613	1,791	1,646	1,695	1,648	1,546	1,631	1,427	1,401
Devon and Cornwall	2,293	2,218	2,415	2,649	2,861	2,751	2,829	3,100	2,586	2,456	2,418	2,409
Dorset	815	816	852	947	884	990	1,075	1,133	1,025	991	997	9,511
Durham	562	579	671	548	622	616	659	634	653	619	596	640
Dyfed-Powys	891	605	673	748	926	748	798	882	684	776	668	753
Essex	2,417	2,275	2,483	2,529	2,589	2,818	2,555	2,380	2,434	2,360	2,320	2,153
Gloucestershire	724	673	837	750	818	887	959	936	847	988	924	905
Greater Manchester	5,262	5,288	5,911	5,835	5,964	5,725	5,251	6,095	5,016	5,043	5,175	5,002
Gwent	1,182	1,036	1,126	9,05	1,044	1,129	1,600	1,212	1,293	1,264	1,173	1,035
Hampshire	3,371	3,333	3,546	3,803	3,783	3,821	3,705	3,638	3,558	3,506	3,630	3,324
Hertfordshire	1,411	1,263	1,426	1,563	1,738	1,664	1,603	1,659	1,618	1,653	1,476	1,548
Humberside	2,478	2,446	2,871	2,590	2,530	2,506	2,638	2,433	2,320	2,334	2,031	1,890
Kent	18,97	1,873	2,024	2,014	2,150	2,154	2,264	2,074	2,190	2,322	9,925	2,011
Lancashire	2,400	2305	2413	2504	3275	3408	3384	3287	2933	2825	27698	2547
Leicestershire	1,600	1,656	1,826	1,859	1,916	1,977	2,036	2,055	1,939	2,017	2,200	2,195
Lincolnshire	942	974	974	966	1,074	1,073	1,019	1,072	1,032	964	888	893
London, City of	70	92	89	89	82	107	82	63	99	97	92	138
Merseyside	2,611	2790	3009	3196	3339	3674	2990	3082	2804	2965	3001	3003
Metropolitan Police	19,517	19,003	20,672	19,091	21,140	21,400	21,890	21,906	20,799	2,1943	2,1653	20,054
Norfolk	931	1,055	1,183	1,213	1,262	1,261	1,241	1,314	1,079	1,272	1,150	1113
Northamptonshire	1,085	1,088	1,178	1,171	1,203	11,443	1,133	1,126	967	1,140	1,033	933
Northumbria	2,234	2,092	2,359	2,232	2,265	2,205	2,228	2,232	2,187	2,054	2,045	20,005
North Wales	1,007	922	1,037	1,124	1,196	1,023	1,089	1,255	1,038	1,083	972	1,036
North Yorkshire	956	933	981	984	1,179	1,066	1,113	1,117	1,063	1,122	983	1,149
Nottinghamshire	1,843	1,711	19,51	1,679	1,824	1,792	1,815	1,724	1,959	2,058	1,887	1,973
South Wales	1,768	1,751	1,841	1,776	1,937	1,682	1,800	1,814	1,643	1,704	1,740	1,762
South Yorkshire	1,370	1,188	1,343	1,364	1,555	1,577	1,771	1,573	1,809	2,123	1,998	1,975
Suffolk	1,864	1,866	2,317	2,143	2,150	2,310	2,117	2,246	2,185	2,014	2,238	2,132
Surrey	838	780	892	929	1,053	813	1,053	1,066	961	938	1,028	853
Surrey	895	909	697	1,273	1,141	1,093	1,083	1,085	788	1,069	966	843
Sussex	1,910	1,780	1,856	2,156	2,303	2,597	2,793	2,702	2,663	2,631	2,635	2,551
Thames Valley	2,668	2,84	3,025	2,923	3,221	3,363	3,281	3,292	3,187	3,332	3,368	3,295
Warwickshire	595	528	609	688	620	632	587	661	576	597	624	554
West Mercia	1,883	1,754	2,029	1,769	1,987	2,062	1,795	1,760	1,632	1,555	1,505	1,422
West Midlands	5,784	5,514	6,050	5,732	5,931	5,407	5,805	5,683	5,449	5,720	5,354	5,355
West Yorkshire	4,558	3,107	1,752	4,151	4,590	4,035	4,320	4,230	3,908	4,196	4,036	3,893
Wiltshire	663	553	645	508	535	631	587	627	528	541	553	593
Total	9,2387	88,110	95,094	95,612	102,704	102,746	103,412	102,791	98,055	100,218	99,051	95,183

Violent crime January 2003 to March 2005

	2005	
Police force	*January*	*February*
Avon and Somerset	30,936	2,671
Bedfordshire	880	783
Cambridgeshire	1,044	846
Cheshire	1,643	1,218
Cleveland	1,271	1,204
Cumbria	827	823
Derbyshire	1,408	1,189
Devon and Cornwall	2,163	1,832
Dorset	899	827
Durham	620	579
Dyfed-Powys	613	604
Essex	2,102	1,820
Gloucestershire	884	773
Greater Manchester	5,135	4,691
Gwent	1,158	992

Violent crime January 2003 to March 2005

	2005	
Police force	*January*	*February*
Hampshire	3,165	2,812
Hertfordshire	1,412	1,324
Humberside	1,789	1,758
Kent	2,046	1,995
Lancashire	2,420	2,273
Leicestershire	2,017	1,899
Lincolnshire	980	855
London, City of	92	65
Merseyside	3,129	3,167
Metropolitan Police	2,248	19,027
Norfolk	1,023	1,055
Northamptonshire	950	860
Northumbria	2,109	1,795
North Wales	1,040	957
North Yorkshire	1,057	1,055

Violent crime January 2003 to March 2005

Police force	2005 January	2005 February
Nottinghamshire	1,897	1,878
South Wales	1825	1,791
South Yorkshire	2,293	2,517
Suffolk	1,972	1,979
Surrey	913	744
Surrey	807	803
Sussex	2,412	2,346
Thames Valley	3,036	2,797
Warwickshire	554	557
West Mercia	1,477	1,286
West Midlands	5,879	5,180
West Yorkshire	3,809	3,714
Wiltshire	543	508
Total	95,637	87,849

Deaths in Custody

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Independent Police Complaints Commission regarding deaths in custody; and if he will make a statement. [57773]

Hazel Blears: I met with the chair of the IPCC in January 2006 to discuss, among other things, deaths during or following police contact. The meeting considered making best use of lessons learnt from deaths and adverse incidents during or following police contact. That work is being taken forward with staff from Home Office, the IPCC, police and other stakeholders.

Driving Licence (Penalty Points)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drivers in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency have lost their driving licence as a result of obtaining the maximum number of penalty points in each of the last three years. [59924]

Paul Goggins: Latest available information taken from the 2003 Court Proceedings Database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform shows that, as a result of 'totting up' of points under s. 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, there were 29,997 disqualifications in England. More local data are only available by police force area and for the Cleveland police there were 809.

2004 data will be available end of March 2006.

Drug Classification

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the misuse of methylamphetamine on *(a)* individuals and *(b)* levels of crime; and what assessment he has made of trends in abuse of the drug. [49351]

Paul Goggins: These issues were covered in the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' methylamphetamine report published in November 2005.

The prevalence of methylamphetamine is relatively low in the UK, however the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs will continue to monitor the situation and further advise the Government within 12 months.

Drug Offences

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were fined between £1,000 and £2,500 for possessing *(a)* cannabis, *(b)* heroin and *(c)* cocaine in each year since 1993. [48443]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is given in the table as follows.

People fined between £1,000 and £2,500 for drug possession offences[1, 2] England and Wales

Year	Drug type Cannabis	Heroin	Cocaine
1993	13	2	5
1994	20	0	5
1995	6	1	4
1996	14	3	4
1997	23	3	5
1998	38	2	6
1999	29	2	11
2000	31	3	12
2001	14	0	5
2002	13	1	8
2003	25	3	7
2004	27	1	14

[1] HM Revenue and Customs data not available. Figures derived from police and court data.

[2] Offenders are included in this table if they are fined for their principal offence i.e the offence for which they were given the most severe penalty.

Fireworks

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many penalty notices have been issued in relation to the illegal use of fireworks in Suffolk since the relevant legislation was introduced. [58509]

Hazel Blears: Offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (made under section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003 for breach of the national fireworks curfew, the illegal possession of category four fireworks and the possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework) attract penalty notices for disorder, as does the offence of throwing fireworks. The offence of throwing fireworks has been included in the penalty notice for disorder scheme since it was introduced nationally during 2004. The offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 were brought into the scheme with effect from 11 October 2004.

The numbers of penalty notices issued for these offences in the Suffolk police force area during 2004, alongside provisional data from January to September 2005, are provided in the following table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for fireworks offences, Suffolk police force area 2004 and January—September 2005 provisional figures

Police force	Throwing fireworks	Breach of fireworks curfew	Possession of a category 4 firework	Possession by under 18 of adult firework
Suffolk				
2004	1	—	—	—
January—September 2005[1]	2	—	—	—

[1] Provisional.

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Forced Marriages

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to ensure proper training for relevant professionals in respect of guidance published on forced marriages. [60470]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

We work hard to distribute the guidelines on dealing with cases of forced marriage as widely as possible to police, education professionals and social workers. This year, the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) will also be producing guidelines for health professionals and registrars. As part of its core work, the FMU conducts an extensive programme of outreach work with statutory agencies. One of the objectives of this programme is to contribute to training on handling forced marriage cases and to support the implementation of the guidance documents.

We are working with our colleagues from the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Centre for Policing Excellence to look at how we monitor the implementation of the guidelines for police. Forced marriage is already built into the risk assessment framework for police. This is being supported by training and adopted by police forces around the country, within the domestic violence portfolio.

Forensic Medical Examiners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the role of forensic medical examiners. [57775]

Hazel Blears: Forensic medical examiners, together with other healthcare professionals, have a key role in relation to the care and welfare of those detained in police custody, victims and police officers injured on duty. As well as considering clinical needs they may be asked to provide forensic input to the investigative process by documenting and interpreting injuries or taking forensic samples. They may also be required to advise the police in a range of circumstances; for example, as to whether a death presents any suspicious circumstances.

Home Curfews

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on drug testing arrangements for home detention curfew detainees. [59301]

Fiona Mactaggart: Offenders released from custody on home detention curfew (HOC) who are also subject to supervision by the probation service (licence or notice of supervision for 18–21 year olds) may be drug tested if they are:

Prolific or other priority offenders (PPOs) as defined by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for the area in which they live

Over 18

Have committed a 'trigger offence' (Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, Section 64 and Schedule 6)—i.e. one of a range of acquisitive offences linked to drug use, and class A drug offences themselves

Have a class A drug habit linked to their offending. There is no separate and specific provision for drug-testing offenders released on HOC.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the report of Tim Gbedemah into allegations of corruption within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate concerning the allocation of visas. [60000]

Mr. McNulty: I refer my hon. Friend to the written ministerial statement which was laid on 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 96WS, along with a copy of the report.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long he expects it to take to complete the investigation into the member of staff in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate accused of sexual misconduct with a visa applicant. [60001]

Mr. McNulty: An investigation into the allegation is now being conducted by IND's security and anti-corruption unit (SACU) as a priority but I cannot estimate how long it might take at this stage.

Licensing Act

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding was provided to Dorset police in relation to the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003; and what period this covered. [56238]

Hazel Blears: No money has been provided to police authorities specifically in relation to the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003.

The third national Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC 3) took place between 14 November 2005 and the beginning of 2006. The Police Standards Unit provided forces with extra funding to implement a range of tactics with the aim of tackling irresponsible drinkers and retailers of alcohol. Dorset police was allocated £19,000 for the campaign.

Dorset will receive its fair share of available resources next year. The allocation of resources locally and appropriate budget management are matters for the Chief constable of Dorset police and the Dorset Police Authority.

National Custody Forum

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the National Custody Forum. [57761]

Hazel Blears: The National Custody Forum, chaired by ACPO, is a multi agency strategic forum, which has been established to assist in the development and dissemination of policy, guidance and best practice to enhance the safe and efficient provision of custody services. The National Custody Forum is underpinned by a network of Regional Custody Fora, which have been established in each of the ACPO Regions in England and Wales.

Pay Settlements

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated cost is of the equal pay settlement between HM Prison Service and the Public and Commercial Services trade union over the next three years. [60519]

Fiona Mactaggart: The estimated cost is between £39 million and £44 million in 2006–07, and £7 million to £9 million in each of the following years. This is subject to the outcome of pay negotiations in those years.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions have taken place between HM Prison Service (HMPS) and the Treasury on the funding of the equal pay settlement between HMPS and the Public and Commercial Services trade union. [60520]

Fiona Mactaggart: Staff from the Prison Service met their treasury counterparts on several occasions to discuss details of the proposed settlement. The final meeting was on one March 2006 to discuss establishing links between the proposed settlement and the recommendations of the Prison Service Pay Review Body.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications for the pay and conditions of other grades within the Prison Service of the equal pay settlement agreed between the service and the Public and Commercial Services trade union. [60521]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service has commissioned the development of a universal job evaluation system. This system will underpin new pay and grading structures for most staff, including those covered by the recent equal pay settlement. Work on the evaluation system began in October 2004 and new pay and grading structures are intended to be in place by April 2008.

Penal Policy

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of intermittent custody schemes; what economic assessment has been undertaken of those schemes; and what plans he has to extend the use of such schemes. [59311]

Fiona Mactaggart: Officials are currently reviewing the learning from the pilots of intermittent custody and I will announce the outcome of that exercise in due course.

Police

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been conducted into the merits of extending the video recording of police interviews. [49131]

Hazel Blears: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 2095W. The research provided an adequate assessment of the operation and impact of visual recording in the pilot areas and, as I indicated in my previous answer, found no discernible differences in terms of criminal justice outcomes. The research would require further work before it could reach publication standard. This will be considered in conjunction with stakeholders with whom we shall review the operational benefits of visual recording of interviews with suspects.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that the Independent Police Complaints Commission sends a substantive reply to a member of the public lodging an appeal within 28 days of that appeal being lodged; [59532]

(2) what the time scales are within which the Independent Police Complaints Commission is expected to handle *(a)* complaints and *(b)* appeals by members of the public; and if he will make a statement. [59534]

(3) whether there is a backlog of appeal cases waiting for determination by the Independent Police Complaints Commission; and if he will make a statement. [59535]

Hazel Blears: The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is responsible for the management of the police complaints system. I will ensure that the chairman receives a copy of the question and replies to the hon. Member directly. Copies of the letter containing the IPCC's response will be placed in the House Libraries.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what methods are used to ensure diversity in the police force. [48559]

Hazel Blears: It remains the Government's policy that the police service will promote equality, fairness and respect and provide a working environment where diversity is recognised to enable it to achieve a greater level of trust and confidence from all communities, which can also be achieved through better engagement with communities through initiatives such as Neighbourhood Policing.

The Home Office and Police Service response to the Commission for Racial Equality Investigation into racism in the police is also a key element in improving the environment within the service and to making the service a more attractive option to those wishing to join.

The Police Service continues to make progress against the Home Secretary's recruitment targets for 2009, and forces are committed to recruit from minority ethnic groups in proportion to, or at a level above, their representation in the local economically active population. Performance against this objective is a key performance indicator in the Policing Performance Assessment Framework. Since 1999, the percentage of police officers from minority ethnic communities has risen from 2 per cent. to 3.5 per cent., an increase of 2,497 minority ethnic officers. The latest figures show that minority ethnic staff make up 6.5 per cent. of the police staff total.

The Home Office is working with the Police Service to accelerate the pace of change. The measures currently in hand include outreach programmes in police forces, engagement with student faith societies and black students' unions to encourage applications from minority ethnic graduates. We are also investigating the possibility of introducing weighted appointment criteria rewarding skills such as appropriate second languages. As part of the National Assessment Centre process we aim to ensure that assessment and selection panels include representatives from minority ethnic communities wherever possible.

Internally, measures are in place to increase female and minority ethnic applications to the High Potential Development Scheme. A learning and development strategy to improve performance in race and diversity was published in November 2004 which introduced the Police Race and Diversity Learning Programme which will ensure improvements in race and diversity through delivery of effective development.

In addition, a national exit interview questionnaire has been developed to encourage forces to capture the reasons for staff leaving the service, with the aim of further work being done to improve the overall retention rate and reduce the disparity in wastage rates for female and minority ethnic staff.

Pornography

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the selling of hardcore pornography via *(a)* bottom shelf newspapers and *(b)* imported material from overseas on the efforts to combat illegal access to pornography; and if he will make a statement. [56004]

Paul Goggins: Under the terms of a voluntary code of practice which is overseen by the National Federation of Retail Newsagents, adult titles containing "hardcore pornography", should be displayed on the top shelves of newsagents' shops and should not be sold to young people under the age of 18.

We believe this code works well but we are aware of the concern which has been expressed about sexually provocative material which is commonly available on the lower shelves of newsagents' shops, and in other retail outlets, and are determined to ensure that the interests of children are properly safeguarded in this regard. Officials will be meeting with representatives of the National Federation of Retail Newsagents and other trade associations shortly.

In respect of illegal explicit pornographic material, which is now increasingly available via the internet, we have recently consulted on a proposal to create an offence of possession in respect of a limited category of the most extreme material. The consultation period ended on 2 December 2005 and a summary of responses will be published in due course.

Prisoners

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* battery and *(b)* mains electrical equipment that prisoners are permitted to keep in their cells; and if he will make a statement. [60077]

Fiona Mactaggart: Battery and mains electrical equipment that prisoners are permitted to retain in their cells varies between prisons. The list of in-possession items for each establishment is set by the governor. Televisions are not considered in-cell possessions, as they are hired from the public sector Prison Service.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 15 March, to question 58643, on prisoners, what estimate he has made of the cost of providing the information requested. [60350]

Fiona Mactaggart: The cost exceeds the limit set out in Cabinet Office guidance for answering parliamentary questions.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison population is being held on remand *(a)* at each prison and *(b)* in aggregate; and what proportion of inmates on remand at each prison are awaiting (i) trial and (ii) sentence. [59312]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service IT System, is provided in the table.

Population of prisoners held on remand and total prison population in England and Wales as at 31 January 2006

	Prisoners held on remand						
Prison	*Remand population (Column B)*	*Untried (Column C)*	*Convicted unsentenced (Column D)*	*Untried as percentage of all remand (Column C/Column B)*	*Convicted unsentenced as percentage of all remand (Column D/Column B)*	*Remand population as percentage of total population (Column B/Column H)*	*Total prison population (Column H)*
Acklington	0	0	0	0	0	0	831
Albany	0	0	0	0	0	0	528
Altcourse	308	191	117	62	38	32	958
Ashfield	63	43	20	68	32	19	332
Ashwell	0	0	0	0	0	0	540
Askham Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	119
Aylesbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	437
Bedford	[illegible]	92	57	62	38	32	472
Belmarsh	431	305	126	71	29	47	914
Birmingham	566	370	196	65	35	39	1,443
Blakenhurst	408	254	154	62	38	39	1,039
Blantyre House	0	0	0	0	0	6	119
Blundeston	0	0	0	0	0	0	456
Brinsford	281	156	125	56	44	60	469

Population of prisoners held on remand and total prison population in England and Wales as at 31 January 2006.

	Prisoners held on remand						
Prison	*Remand population (Column B)*	*Untried (Column C)*	*Convicted unsentenced (Column D)*	*Untried as percentage of all remand (ColumnC/ Column B)*	*Convicted unsentenced as percentage of all remand (ColumnD / Column B)*	*Remand population as percentage of total population (ColumnB/ Column H)*	*Total prison population (Column H)*
Bristol	239	135	104	56	44	40	598
Brixton	461	311	150	67	33	57	802
Brockhill	86	60	26	70	30	62	139
Bronzefield	247	164	83	66	34	60	410
Buckley Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	153
Bullingdon	227	132	95	58	42	24	953
Bullwood Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	145
Camp Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	586
Canterbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	309
Cardiff	199	103	96	52	48	27	726
Castington	92	59	33	64	36	28	332
Channings Wood	0	0	0	0	0	0	647
Chelmsford	246	129	117	52	48	44	558
Coldingley	0	0	0	0	0	0	378
Cookham Wood	1	1	0	100	0	1	176
Dartmoor	0	0	0	0	0	0	616
Deerbolt	0	0	0	0	0	0	382
Doncaster	380	220	160	58	42	34	1,105
Dorchester	105	60	45	57	43	44	241
Dovegate	0	0	0	0	0	0	833
Dover	0	0	0	0	0	0	271
Downview	5	5	0	100	0	2	325
Drake Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	284
Durham	320	208	112	65	35	40	792
East Sutton Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	94
Eastwood Park	91	50	41	55	45	31	295
Edmunds Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	292
Elmley	336	210	126	63	38	34	980
Erlestoke	0	0	0	0	0	0	425
Everthorpe	0	0	0	0	0	0	653
Exeter	217	118	99	54	46	44	497
Featherstone	0	0	0	0	0	0	607
Feltham	517	386	131	75	25	81	636
Ford	0	0	0	0	0	0	464
Forest Bank	359	221	138	62	38	37	980
Foston Hall	22	9	13	41	59	9	241
Frankland	0	0	0	0	0	0	698
Full Sutton	0	0	0	0	0	0	574
Garth	0	0	0	0	0	0	660
Gartree	0	0	0	0	0	0	491
Glen Parva	190	111	79	58	42	27	714
Gloucester	139	69	70	50	50	50	280
Grendon/Spring Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	518
Guys Marsh	0	0	0	0	0	0	562
Haslar	0	0	0	0	0	0	143
Haverigg	0	0	0	0	0	0	554
Hewell Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	149
Highdown	320	218	102	68	32	43	740
Highpoint	0	o	0	0	0	0	808
Hindley	45	24	21	53	47	11	403
Hollesle–Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	247
Holloway	215	105	110	49	51	48	444
Holme House	170	110	60	65	35	19	900
Hull	273	160	113	59	41	28	960
Huntercombe	0	0	0	0	0	0	323
Kingston (Portsmouth)	0	0	0	0	0	0	193
Kirkham	0	0	0	0	0	0	445
Kirklevington	0	0	0	0	0	0	222
Lancaster	0	0	0	0	0	0	233
Lancaster Farms	100	44	56	44	56	22	463
Latchmere House	0	0	0	0	0	0	175
Leeds	287	157	130	55	45	26	1,120
Leicester	179	109	70	61	39	52	346

Population of prisoners held on remand and total prison population in England and Wales as at 31 January 2006.

				Prisoners held on remand			
Prison	*Remand population (Column B)*	*Untried (Column C)*	*Convicted unsentenced (Column D)*	*Untried as percentage of all remand (ColumnC/ Column B)*	*Convicted unsentenced as percentage of all remand (ColumnD / Column B)*	*Remand population as percentage of total population (ColumnB/ Column H)*	*Total prison population (Column H)*
Lewes	218	143	75	66	34	40	540
Leyhill	0	0	0	0	0	0	396
Lincoln	128	71	57	55	45	28	464
Lindholme	0	0	0	0	0	0	800
Littlehey	0	0	0	0	0	0	691
Liverpool	288	182	106	63	37	23	1,269
Long Lartin	0	0	0	0	0	0	434
Low Newton	46	26	20	57	43	21	218
Lowdham Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	518
Maidstone	0	0	0	0	0	0	553
Manchester	372	227	145	61	39	30	1,239
Moorland Open	0	0	0	0	0	0	250
Moorland	0	0	0	0	0	0	756
Norton Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	277
New Hall	73	30	43	41	59	23	324
North Sea Camp	0	0	0	0	0	0	253
Northallerton	0	0	0	0	0	0	152
Morwich	222	132	90	59	41	29	755
Nottingham	248	129	119	52	48	49	508
Onley	0	0	0	0	0	0	563
Pare	87	50	37	57	43	9	987
Parkhurst	20	10	10	50	50	4	504
Pentonville	735	509	226	69	31	65	1,129
Peterborough	199	120	79	60	40	25	793
Portland	0	0	0	0	0	0	425
Preston	302	177	125	59	41	51	594
Ranby	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,016
Reading	130	63	67	48	52	45	288
Risley	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,066
Rochester	0	0	0	0	0	0	384
Rye Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	590
Send	0	0	0	0	0	0	201
Shepton Mallet	0	0	0	0	0	0	183
Shrewsbury	106	57	49	54	46	33	320
Stafford	0	0	0	0	0	0	674
Standford Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	416
Stocken	0	0	0	0	0	0	603
Stoke Heath	39	30	9	77	23	6	614
Styal	120	69	51	58	43	32	376
Sudbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	551
Swaleside	0	0	0	0	0	0	770
Swansea	108	65	43	60	40	29	370
Swinfen Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	601
The Mount	0	0	0	0	0	0	719
The Verne	0	0	0	0	0	0	557
The Wolds	0	0	0	0	0	0	299
Thorn Cross	0	0	0	0	0	0	253
Usk/Prescoed	0	0	0	0	0	0	415
Wakefield	0	0	0	0	0	0	593
Wandsworth	593	373	220	63	37	40	1,469
Warren Hill	41	30	11	73	27	20	208
Wayland	0	0	0	0	0	0	703
Wealstun	0	0	0	0	0	0	774
Wellingborough	0	0	0	0	0	0	580
Werrington	0	0	0	0	0	0	116
Wetherby	53	32	21	60	40	17	316
Whatton	0	0	0	0	0	0	357
Whitemoor	0	0	0	0	0	0	454
Winchester	296	166	130	56	44	42	701
Woodhill	335	229	106	68	32	43	772
Wormwood Scrubs	496	294	202	59	41	40	1,228
Wymott	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,044
Total	13,529	8,313	5,216	61	39	18	75,920

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Departm[illegible] what proportion of women entering custody did so o[illegible]nd in each year since 1997. [59313]

Fiona Mactaggart: In[illegible]nation on women prisoners entering custody and held on remand in each year since 1997 is given in the following table.

Proportion of women entering custody on remand each year since 1997[1]

	Women prisoner receptions on remand	*Total women prisoner first receptions*	*Proportion on remand (percentage)*
1997	5,124	8,508	60
1998	6,258	9,995	63
1999	6,721	10,875	62

Proportion of women entering custody on remand each year since 1997[1]

	Women prisoner receptions on remand	*Total women prisoner first receptions*	*Proportion on remand (percentage)*
2000	6,584	10,682	62
2001	7,191	11,252	64
2002	8,690	12,601	69
2003	9,032	12,946	70
2004	7,978	12,554	64

[1] Source—Table 7.1 of Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004

Note:

First receptions provide an indication of the number of new prisoners in a time period. A person received into prison to serve a sentence may previously have been received on remand after conviction prior to sentence, and before that as a remand prisoner awaiting trial. First receptions will count that prisoner only once in the relevant period in which they were first received.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates held on remand received a non-custodial sentence in each year since 1997. [59314]

Fiona Mactaggart: The final court outcome for persons remanded in custody at some stage in magistrates court proceedings, for 2000–04, is given in table 7.11 of the web-only tables for Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004 available at the following web address:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/omcs.html

Similar information for 1997–99 is published in Table 2.6 of Prison Statistics England and Wales 1999, a copy of which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Public Order

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many retailers have been fined under section 54 and 54A of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 in *(a)* Swindon, *(b)* the South West and *(c)* England in each year since 2003. [59020]

Hazel Blears: No records of prosecutions under section 54 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 were notified to the Home Office for 2003 and 2004.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many graffiti removal notices were issued in Swindon in each year since 2003. [59015]

Hazel Blears: There has not been any graffiti removal notices issued in Swindon. Section 48–52 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 introducing these provisions will be commenced on 6 April 2006.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued since the introduction in each local police team area in Beverley and Holderness. [59023]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) were made available to the courts from 1 April 1999. From commencement up to 1 June 2000 data were collected on aggregate numbers only by police force area. Data are not available for each local police team area. However, since 1 June 2000, from copies of the orders received, we are able to determine the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed. A table giving annual data, up to 30 June 2005 (latest available), broken down by local government authority area is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he *(a)* is taking and *(b)* plans to take to tackle antisocial behaviour outside nightclubs and public houses in the West Midlands region; and if he will make a statement. [58907]

Hazel Blears: The Government are determined to target those individuals involved in alcohol disorder in our towns and cities. We have recently undertaken our third Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC) to crack down on such behaviour. West Midlands police received £192,000 from the Home Office and overall during the campaign police and trading standard officers carried out over 6,000 test purchase operations, dealt with more than 30,000 offences and made over 25,000 arrests. The police work that led to the success of AMEC will now continue on a daily basis as part of everyday mainstream police activities. We have also introduced a range of new powers through the Licensing Act 2003 to deal with the problems of alcohol misuse. In addition, the Violent Crime Reduction Bill will introduce a new civil order—a Drinking Banning Order—which will allow for the exclusion from the area concerned of individuals aged 16 or over who are responsible for alcohol-related disorder.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of inmates who are being held on remand have been detained in prison previously. [59317]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested cannot be provided due to disproportionate cost.

Slave Trade Abolition

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for a national slavery memorial day in 2007; and if he will make a statement. [51761]

Paul Goggins: There are no plans for a specific memorial day. The Government have, however, brought together influential stakeholders in an advisory group, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, to discuss arrangements for the bicentenary in 2007 of the passage of the Slave Trade Act which made the slave trade illegal in the British empire. A wide range of activity at local and national level is currently under consideration.

Special Constables

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables there were in each police force area in each year since 1997. [60104]

Hazel Blears: The information is set out in the following table. Data on special constabulary numbers is published annually in Home Office Statistical Bulletins on police strength in England and Wales, which are available in the Library. Figures for March 2006 will be published later this year.

The total strength[1] for special constables by police force area (1997—2005)

Police force area	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*March 2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Avon and Somerset	759	621	547	459	400	364	345	305	396
Bedfordshire	182	186	154	151	115	118	98	146	209
Cambridgeshire	303	320	310	274	218	207	189	193	199
Cheshire	475	459	407	350	290	191	161	173	192
Cleveland	160	164	126	128	93	85	102	85	66
Cumbria	189	198	204	176	156	102	94	77	126
Derbyshire	428	380	317	282	275	260	249	301	369
Devon and Cornwall	1,148	1,024	918	870	804	689	645	602	582
Dorset	289	315	305	298	267	253	214	210	230
Durham	184	144	159	157	146	134	94	81	91
Essex	634	638	544	483	445	381	371	[illegible]	363
Gloucestershire	297	276	233	206	183	154	157	155	146
Greater Manchester	685	598	523	457	367	338	340	345	380
Hampshire	621	698	760	615	462	444	373	346	369
Hertfordshire	297	306	238	216	198	206	193	206	226
Humberside	340	324	269	246	212	207	[illegible]	209	328
Kent	589	592	526	436	392	327	286	341	338
Lancashire	483	489	449	382	360	363	351	336	319
Leicestershire	415	406	316	247	162	143	[illegible]	159	181
Lincolnshire	271	260	216	195	166	155	[illegible]	156	179
London, City of	86	76	[illegible]	56	43	36	[illegible]	54	52
Merseyside	401	419	[illegible]	476	541	468	503	371	259
Metropolitan Police	1,714	1,282	1,138	758	774	680	692	742	697
Norfolk	402	337	336	285	259	244	239	241	253
Northamptonshire	316	288	230	199	188	177	189	197	242
Northumbria	533	400	342	332	300	256	221	169	240
North Yorkshire	362	358	276	217	182	185	177	160	173
Nottinghamshire	620	558	461	411	335	341	261	295	333
South Yorkshire	308	281	246	205	188	206	204	200	204
Staffordshire	685	595	468	482	402	384	391	376	409
Suffolk	379	397	420	391	349	308	275	266	267
Surrey	297	235	224	175	149	187	212	255	289
Sussex	472	442	393	352	306	306	303	181	200
Thames Valley	656	609	569	472	418	356	369	341	375
Warwickshire	381	345	261	260	221	209	190	169	190
West Mercia	582	512	515	476	399	339	309	280	263
West Midlands	945	889	731	680	617	598	637	715	959
West Yorkshire	690	589	559	484	415	349	374	403	417
Wiltshire	154	149	184	173	152	147	154	169	174
Dyfed-Powys	283	254	237	202	191	157	152	151	167
Gwent	157	119	113	119	137	142	130	136	144
North Wales	341	358	400	247	207	125	133	124	124
South Wales	361	366	338	267	254	277	173	218	198
Total 43 forces in England and Wale	19,874	18,256	16,484	14,347	12,738	11,598	11,037	10,988	11,918

[1] Total strength is based on headcount figures.

Terrorism

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what penalties exist in British law in respect of the *(a)* taking-up of arms against UK or other coalition armed forces and *(b)* training in terrorist camps by (i) UK and (ii) non-UK residents; and whether he plans to review these penalties. [58659]

Hazel Blears: In any given case, whether a prosecution can be brought will depend on the particular circumstances that pertain in that case.

A person of any nationality who takes up arms against UK or allied forces in the United Kingdom is likely to commit an offence and the penalty will depend on the precise nature of the conduct the person has undertaken.

As a general rule, the UK courts only have jurisdiction in respect of offences committed within the UK but there are a number of exceptions.

Section 9 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 provides that if a subject of Her Majesty commits murder or manslaughter outside the UK, regardless of the nationality of the victim, he can be tried in the English courts. Section 10 provides that if a person is fatally injured outside England but dies in England, or vice versa, any offences associated with the death can be tried in the English courts. Although section 10 does not expressly limit its application to British subjects such a limitation has been implied in decided cases. These offences carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Under section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 the offence of torture can be tried by the English courts, regardless of the nationality of the offender and where the acts took place. The offence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Section 51 of the International Criminal Court Act 2001 makes genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes offences under the law of England and Wales. The offence applies to acts in England and Wales, and to acts outside the UK by a UK national, a UK resident or a person subject to UK service jurisdiction. The maximum penalty is 30 years' imprisonment, unless the offence is the commission of murder, or an offence ancillary to murder, in which case the penalty is as for murder (life imprisonment) or, as the case may be, the penalty for the ancillary offence.

The Geneva Conventions Act 1957 makes it an offence under UK law for any person, whatever his nationality and whether in or outside the UK to commit, aid, abet or procure a grave breach of any of the Conventions in the Schedules to the Act or the First Protocol (as set in Schedule five to the Act). The maximum penalty is 30 years' imprisonment, unless the offence is the commission of murder in which case the penalty is as for murder (life imprisonment).

Under section 3 of the Explosive Substances Act 1883 (once it has been amended by the Terrorism Bill) it will be an offence to carry out certain acts preparatory to causing an explosion anywhere in the world. The preparatory acts must take place in the UK, a dependency or, in the case of a person who is a citizen of the UK and colonies, elsewhere. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

It is an element of the offences of high treason to levy war against the Queen in her realm or to be an adherent of the Queen's enemies in her realm giving them aid or comfort in the realm or elsewhere. To levy war against Her Majesty is also an element of treason felony.

Enemies are subjects of all states against which Her Majesty has declared or proclaimed war, and the subjects of all states with which there are hostilities, whether or not war has been declared.

Alien friends can be convicted of treason but alien enemies cannot. An alien who is resident within British territory owes allegiance to the Crown and can be liable for treason. An alien who has been resident but has left can be guilty of treason if he still enjoys the protection of the Crown, for example, by continuing to hold a passport. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Sections 63A to 63D of the Terrorism Act 2000 make provision in relation to extra-territorial application of terrorist offences.

Under section 63A, if a UK national or a UK resident does anything outside the UK which, if it had been done in the UK, would have been an offence under section 54 (weapons training) (section 54 will be removed from section 63A by the Terrorism Bill) or 56 to 61 (directing terrorist organisation, possession for terrorist purposes, collection of information and inciting terrorism overseas) he shall be guilty of that offence in the UK.

The penalties are as follows:

Sections 54, 57 and 58: indictment, 10 years, a fine or both; summary, six months, fine up to the statutory maximum or both.

Section 56: life

Section 59 to 61: The same as the penalty for the offences listed in subsections (2) of those sections.

Under section 63B, if a UK national or UK resident does anything outside the UK as an act of terrorism or for the purposes of terrorism which, if it had been done in the UK would have amounted to one of the offences in section 63B(2), he shall be guilty of that offence. The penalty is the penalty for the offence, listed in section 63B(2), of which the person is convicted.

Under section 63C, if any person does anything outside the UK, as an act of terrorism or for the purposes of terrorism, to, or in relation to, a UK national, a UK resident or a protected person (as defined in section 63C(3)) and his action, if done in the UK would have constituted one of the offences in section 63C(2), he shall be guilty of that offence. The penalty is the penalty for the offence, listed in section 63C(2), of which he is convicted.

Section 63D relates to attacks on UK diplomatic and other premises. Under section 63D(1), if any person (1) does anything outside the UK, as an act of terrorism or for the purposes of terrorism; (2) his action is done in connection with an attack on relevant premises or a vehicle ordinarily used by protected persons; (3) the attack is made when a protected person is on or in the premises or vehicle; and (4) his action, if done in the UK, would amount to one of the offences listed in section 63D(2), he shall be guilty of that offence. The penalty is the penalty for the offence, listed in section 63D(2), of which he is convicted.

Under section 63D(3), if any person (1) does anything outside the UK, as an act of terrorism or for the purposes of terrorism; (2) his action consists of a threat of an attack on relevant premises or a vehicle ordinarily used by protected persons; (3) the attack is threatened to be made when a protected person is, or is likely to be, on or in the premises or vehicle; and (4) his action, if done in the UK, would amount to one of the offences listed in section 63D(4), he shall be guilty of that offence. The penalty is the penalty for the offence, listed in section 63D(4), of which the person is convicted.

The United Nations Personnel Act 1997 creates various offences of doing things against UN workers and vehicles.

Section 1 provides that if any person, outside the UK, commit any of the offences listed in subsection (2), to or in relation to a UN worker, he is guilty of that offence in the UK. Those offences are murder, manslaughter, culpable homicide, rape, assault causing injury, kidnapping, abduction, false imprisonment, the offences under sections 18, 20 to 24, 28, 29, 30 and 47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, and section two of the Explosive Substances Act 1883. The penalty is the penalty for the offence, listed in section 1(2), of which the person is convicted.

Section 2 outlaws attacks on UN premises and vehicles. A person will be guilty of the offences under section two of the Explosive Substances Act 1883, section one of the Criminal Damage Act 1971, article 3 of the Criminal Damage (NI) Order 1977 or wilful fire-raising. The penalty is the penalty for the offence, listed in section 2(2), of which he is convicted.

Section 3 outlaws threats of attacks on UN workers. The penalty is a term not exceeding 10 years and not exceeding the penalty for the offence threatened.

A UN worker is defined in section four. It includes those deployed as part of the military component of a UN operation. UN operation does not include action authorised by the Security Council as an enforcement action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, in which UN workers are engaged as combatants against organised armed forces and to which the law of international armed conflict applies.

Under section 4 of the Foreign Enlistment Act 1870 it is an offence for a British subject to enlist in the service of a foreign state which is at war with another foreign state which is a "friendly state". The maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment.

As noted previously, Section 63A of the Terrorism Act extends the jurisdiction of Section 54 of that Act which relates to weapons training. The Terrorism Bill will remove section 54 from section 63A and provide instead that any person who does an act outside the UK which, if committed within the UK, would amount to an offence under section 54 shall be guilty of that offence. The Terrorism Bill creates further offences of training for terrorism (maximum penalty on indictment of ten years' imprisonment, a fine or both) and attendance at a place used for terrorist training (maximum penalty on indictment of ten years' imprisonment, a fine or both). In either case the nationality of the offender is not material. A person can be liable for action occurring outside the UK in both cases, but in relation to the offence of training for terrorism the extension of jurisdiction is limited to offences committed by reference to the commission, preparation or instigation of Convention offences (as defined in Schedule one to the Bill).

Video Games

Jessica Morden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there were of retailers selling video games with an 18 classification to children under the age of 18-years in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Newport East in the last year for which figures are available. [17761]

Paul Goggins: There is no specific offence of selling video games with an '18' classification to children under the age of 18 years. There is, however, an offence of supplying video recordings of classified work in breach of classification under the Video Recordings Act 1984, which partly covers video games as well as videos.

In England and Wales in 2004 there were 11 prosecutions for this offence, of which four were against companies. One of these prosecutions against a company took place in South East Gwent petty sessional area, which covers Newport East.

World Cup

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions the Government have had with other governments on policing the borders of Germany during the 2006 FIFA World cup; what the outcome of these discussions was; and if he will make a statement. [60349]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* There have been extensive discussions with the German Government and the governments in neighbouring and transit countries regarding the monitoring of fans travelling to Germany and host countries. Uniformed English police officers will work with the Federal police in Germany and in the UK. English police officers will also be deployed in transit countries.

Youth Custody Statistics

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many 15 to 17 year olds were in custody in each of the last 10 years. [59322]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested which is available is provided in the table.

Information for prison establishments is as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

Information for Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes has been supplied by the Youth Justice Board.

Young persons population in custody at 30 June 1996 to 2005

	Local authority secure children's homes[1]	*Secure training centres*[2]	*15–17 year olds in prison*
1996			2,093
1997			2,479
1998			2,466
1999			2,422
2000	156	48	2,434
2001	151	44	2,434
2002	153	55	2,607
2003	183	104	2,253
2004	142	115	2,274
2005	111	169	2,310

[1] Figures supplied by YJB. The YJB was established in April 2000, and figures prior to 2000 for 15–17 year olds detained in LASCHs is not centrally available. However, total numbers of those detained in LASCHs prior to 2000 are published in Table 1.2 of Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004.

[2] Introduced in 2000—figures from YJB.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 27 March 2006

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

African Catalytic Growth Fund

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the establishment of the African Catalytic Growth Fund. [60431]

Hilary Benn: The World Bank's Africa Action Plan, which forms part of the World Bank's response to the commitments made at Gleneagles last June and was endorsed by bank governors at their annual meeting in Washington in September, proposed the establishment of a "Catalytic Growth Fund". Its purpose is to help Africa make faster progress on meeting the MDGs, particularly the "hardest-to-reach" ones like health and access to water, and increasing the rate of economic growth. Its aim is to complement other sources of development financing, including those from the International Development Association (IDA), while, at the same time, being innovative and creative in supporting countries that have shown an ability to make good use of increased amounts of aid, as well as countries with reforming and post-conflict Governments that show a commitment to reducing poverty. Money will also be given to regional projects to deal with needs that cross borders.

We welcome the Bank's agreement that use of the Fund will be guided by the priorities of the Africa Partnership Forum and that the World Bank will ensure regular consultations with Fund donors, African Governments and regional institutions.

The Fund will be financed by voluntary contributions from World Bank members. The UK is the first country to pledge support, our £200 million contribution was announced in October 2005. The Bank is also seeking contributions from other donors. We expect the first projects to be approved in the coming months.

Coercive Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2370W, on coercive abortion, what the response was of *(a)* the Chinese Government and *(b)* the unofficial delegation of senior Chinese policy-makers who visited the UK in August 2005; and if he will make a statement. [59463]

Mr. Thomas: We have not yet had a response from the Government of China on coercive abortion. The unofficial Chinese delegation which visited London last year took note of our concerns. We will continue to raise our concern on this issue and to make further inquiries through our embassy in Beijing.

Development Aid

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which Commonwealth countries receive international development aid. [55952]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the table providing details of DAC and UK Bilateral and Multilateral funding for 2004 to Commonwealth Countries.

DFID also provides non-attributable core support to the range of Commonwealth countries through the Programmes of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Total DAC and UK bilateral and multilateral official development assistance/official aid (ODA/OA) by recipient country 2004[1]

	Net bilateral ODA/OA[2]			
Country	*United Kingdom*	*of which: Debt relief*[3]	*Total DAC donors*	*Total multilateral*[4]
Antigua and Barbuda	0.0	—	0.7	0.7
Bangladesh	137.9	—	345.4	406.7
Barbados	0.2	—	1.4	14.5
Belize	0.2	1.0	2.1	2.3
Botswana	0.3	—	17.8	4.5
Brunei	0.0	—	0.4	0.0
Cameroon	16.4	15.0	312.2	102.9
Cyprus	0.0	—	11.9	17.3
Dominica	-2.0	—	5.8	10.0
Fiji[5]	0.0	—	19.9	14.8
Gambia	0.3	—	6.4	27.8
Ghana	143.8	64.0	489.4	246.4
Grenada	0.4	—	5.7	2.9
Guyana	11.1	—	44.1	34.8
India	202.0	—	11.4	364.1
Jamaica	4.1	3.0	4.3	35.5
Kenya	25.0	—	256.2	90.8
Kiribati[5]	0.0	—	5.5	3.6
Lesotho	4.0	—	19.1	37.1
Malawi	65.2	0.0	168.3	90.7
Malaysia	0.3	—	156.5	1.7
Maldives	0.2	—	4.9	7.4
Malta	0.0	—	0.2	3.8

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Total DAC and UK bilateral and multilateral official development assistance/official aid (ODA/OA) by recipient country 2004[1]

Net bilateral ODA/OA[2]

Country	*United Kingdom*	*of which: Debt relief*[3]	*Total DAC donors*	*Total multilateral*[4]
Mauritius	0.1	—	8.0	13.9
Mozambique	36.0	—	397.3	270.9
Namibia	1.5	—	70.8	18.4
Nigeria	68.8	—	171.5	141.7
Pakistan	49.6	23.0	208.8	559.1
Papua New Guinea[5]	0.0	—	136.4	9.4
Samoa (Western)[5]	0.0	—	13.4	3.3
Seychelles	0.0	—	3.3	1.6
Sierra Leone	33.2	0.0	89.0	106.7
Singapore	0.0	—	5.0	0.0
Solomon Islands[5]	0.0	—	63.7	2.9
South Africa	47.5	—	251.2	85.3
Sri Lanka	9.2	—	T84.3	87.6
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.0	—	-0.1	0.5
St. Lucia	-15.1	—	-13.0	1.3
St. Vincent and Grenadines	0.0	—	4.0	2.1
Swaziland	0.8	—	57.0	6.4
Tanzania	117.7	—	561.8	389.5
Tonga[5]	0.0	—	8.1	2.4
Trinidad and Tobago	0.2	—	3.9	-4.4
Tuvalu[5]	0.0	—	2.9	1.4
Uganda	58.7	—	372.5	259.1
Vanuatu[5]	0.0	—	18.9	1.7
Zambia	154.2	133.0	406.7	181.8

[1] 2003 data are shown since these are the latest figures available for all columns in the table except UK net bilateral ODA/OA and presenting 2004 figures for this column would prevent comparisons.

[2] Total net bilateral ODA/OA comprises flows from 22 DAC member countries, including the UK but excludes the European Commission.

[3] DFID also reported £0.56 million as a multilateral payment to the HIPC trust fund in 2003.

[4] Total amounts presented here. Figures are not yet available for the imputed UK share of multilateral net ODA/OA.

[5] Individual country information is not available as UK to Pacific expenditure is at regional level only.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60336]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) is strongly committed to the targets set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. During the refurbishments of our UK offices we incorporated many energy saving mechanisms; for instance, a new building management system allow us to monitor and manage energy usage to a much greater extent than in the past. DFID has also installed energy efficient heating systems and lighting systems which are movement sensitive and take account of natural lighting levels. An environment management system has been implemented at both UK offices.

DFID is also currently installing timers to regulate energy usage and additional sub-meters to monitor our energy usage even more closely in the future. We have ensured that 100 per cent. electricity used in our main UK offices is from renewable sources and we are also currently investigating additional options such as combined heat and power plants, solar panels and a wind turbine at our East Kilbride office. The design for the refurbishment of our East Kilbride office has received an "excellent" and the London office a "very good" rating under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM). We are also actively encouraging staff to use energy efficiently, for instance by switching off equipment when not in use rather than simply leaving on "stand-by". DFID is also in the process of arranging under the Carbon Trust Framework Agreement, a carbon management programme including an energy audit of both UK offices.

India

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost was of the British aid programme to India in the last year for which figures are available; what projects the programme funded; and what the objectives of the programme were. [58164]

Mr. Thomas: This year, DFID will spend around £250 million in India—the Department's largest country programme in the world.

DFID's India programme supports the achievement of the Government of India's (GoI) 10th Plan and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) poverty reduction targets, as outlined in our India Country Assistance Plan (CAP) for 2004–08 (available on DFID's website www.dfid.gov.uk).

The programme is provided in close partnership with the Union Government and the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. In these states, and at the national level, DFID supports the Indian Government's measures to improve the quality and poverty impact of public policies and services and in creating the necessary conditions for economic growth. Our funds are directed at increasing access to basic education and health and to improving the lives of poor people in rural and urban areas. We also promote better management of the environment and support activities to empower the poor, especially women and those who are less able to represent themselves.

For example, in West Bengal, our Kolkata Urban Services for the Poor Programme aims to help slum dwellers directly, through funding improvements to slum infrastructure (for example; better drainage, road systems, latrines, solid waste management), and indirectly and in the longer term through supporting overall city management, building in a poverty focus to urban planning, strengthening urban management systems, and working to help municipal authorities become more accountable to citizens. A parallel programme operates in Andhra Pradesh and one is also planned for Madhya Pradesh.

In Andhra Pradesh, our Rural Livelihoods Project supports the State Government in helping poor rural households to develop new livelihood options and landless farmers to earn income from the use of common lands through better use of water in drought-prone areas. The project aims to extend the reach of these schemes to target the poorest and most excluded groups including women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Alongside assistance to its four focus states, DFID is strengthening its National Programme to provide significant resources for central programmes in key areas, including health and education where progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) needs to accelerate. For example, DFID is currently supporting the Government of India's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) programme with a £210 million commitment in close collaboration with other donors. This programme is aimed at ensuring that by 2010, all children in India receive eight years of basic education of acceptable quality regardless of sex, caste, creed, family income or location and has already resulted in a reduction in the number of out of school children from 25 million in 2003 to 13.5 million in March 2005. DFID is also financing over 20 per cent. (£128 million) of the Government of India's National Polio Eradication Programme, which has succeeded in confining this disease to only a few isolated pockets in the country.

Through the National and State programmes, DFID is also placing renewed emphasis on support to Indian civil society, to strengthen the capacity of poor people to participate in decisions affecting their lives.

A table of all projects currently supported by DFID India is as follows:

DFID India programme and projects active in financial year 2005–06

Programme/Project	*Project start date*
Andhra Pradesh Power Sector Reforms—Phase 2	1993
West Bengal District Primary Education—Phase I	1997
Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring Project	1998
Oil Seeds	1998
Andhra Pradesh Urban Services for the Poor	1999
Orissa: Public Sector Enterprise Reforms Extension Phase	1999
West Bengal District Primary Education—Phase II	1999
Western India Rainfed Farming Project	1999
Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods	1999
National Microfinance Support Project-SIDBI	1999
Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project	2000
Orissa: Post Cyclone Reconstruction of Primary Schools	2001
Kolkata Environment Improvement Project	2001
Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme	2001
Orissa: District Primary Education Programme	2001
Pulse Polio—support for polio eradication	2002
Orissa: Interim Health Sector Support	2002
Madhya Pradesh: Technical Assistance for Power Sector Reform	2002
Orissa: Public Sector Enterprise Reforms II	2003
Madhya Pradesh Health Guarantee Scheme	2003
Orissa Civil Society Programme	2003
Madhya Pradesh: Rural Livelihoods	2003
Pro-Poor Globalisation Support for UNCTAD	2003
Orissa: Industrial Policy Resolution	2003
West Bengal: Public Sector Enterprise Reforms—Phase 1	2004
Kolkatta Urban Services for the Poor	2004
India: Access to Justice Programme	2004
UNICEF—Child Environment Phase II	2004
National AIDS Control Programme	2004
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan	2004
Child Registration—support to UNICEF	2004
Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) advocacy component of UNICEF	2004
Reproductive and Child Health II—Technical Assistance to UNFPA	2004
Small and Medium Enterprise Development Programme	2004
Pilot Private Sector Partnerships Project	2004
Orissa: Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods	2004
ADB Trust Fund	2004
UNDP Trust Fund	2004
UNDP Trust Fund (Disaster Risk Management Programme)	2004
UNICEF—Floods	2005
ILO IPAC Elimination of Child Labour	2005
Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction	2005
West Bengal Health Sector Support	2005
West Bengal: Civil Society Organisations	2005
Andhra Pradesh Education Strategies Project	2005
Pulse Polio—support to WHO	2005
Pulse Polio—support to UNICEF	2005
Reproductive and Child Health Programme—Phase 2	2005
Revised National Tuberculosis Programme—Phase 2 (National)	2005
Environment Planning and Co-ordination	2005
World Bank Trust Fund	2005
West Bengal: Support for Rural Decentralisation	2006
UNICEF Strategic Partnership for India Trust Fund	2006

Nepal

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what conditions were attached to each *(a)* grant and *(b)* loan to support investment in water supply and sanitation in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal to which the UK is a contributor. [60941]

Hilary Benn: DFID is not contributing directly to efforts to improve water supply and sanitation in the Kathmandu Valley. The ADB, of which the UK is a shareholder, is co-financing the water supply and sanitation project in Kathmandu Valley along with Japan, Sweden and OPEC.

The donor conditions were the formation of the Water Supply Management Board for Kathmandu Valley and the establishment of the Water Utility

Operator, a largely Government owned company, assisted and advised by an international management contractor.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether it is his policy to support the privatisation of the water supply service and infrastructure in Nepal. [60942]

Hilary Benn: The DFID policy on privatisation of water supply and infrastructure in Nepal mirrors our global policy. Our aim is to support and encourage more effective and efficient service delivery irrespective of whether those services are delivered publicly or privately, and we respond to requests from our development partners. In Nepal, DFID has not been engaged in privatisation work and has centred its efforts on helping to improve water and sanitation in rural areas with a special focus on services to the poorest and socially excluded.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether development aid provided by his Department to Nepal is conditional on the hiring of UK-based consultants. [61132]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's development assistance to Nepal is not conditional on the hiring of UK-based consultants. UK development assistance globally has been fully untied since April 2001.

Rwanda

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the Government's partnership with the Rwandan Government on development. [54085]

Hilary Benn: The Governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Rwanda have concluded discussions on their development partnership and have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect. The new MoU, which was signed on 13 February by representatives of the two Governments, supercedes the previous MoU originally signed in 1999.

The new 10-year arrangement re-affirms and extends the UK's development partnership with Rwanda. The partnership focuses on reducing poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Rwanda, as well as the promotion of peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Currently, we allocate bilateral development assistance worth £46 million each year to Rwanda. Subject to Rwanda honouring its commitments under the MoU, the UK expects to maintain bilateral assistance at this level or higher over the next 10 years. Of this, we expect that at least two thirds will be provided as Poverty Reduction Budget Support.

In recent years, the United Kingdom has provided substantial development assistance to Rwanda. There have been good results in the form of impressive development progress, with improvements in the quality of life of Rwanda's people, as well as increased peace and security. It is in the light of this good progress that we have agreed the new MoU as a basis for providing more predictable finance for Rwanda's development.

The MoU sets out shared objectives as well as specific commitments made by each side and arrangements for monitoring and review. The MoU also specifies circumstances under which the UK's development assistance may be interrupted or reduced. The MoU will be underpinned by a set of specific, monitorable benchmarks, to be agreed with the Government of Rwanda. These will provide a clear basis for monitoring adherence to the MoU as well as tracking the progress of our development partnership with Rwanda, and will provide a basis for continuing dialogue and discussion with the Government of Rwanda.

I have arranged for copies of the document entitled 'Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda' to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Sub-Saharan Africa (Trade)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance and co-ordination is available from his Department to sub-Saharan African Governments who wish to send trade delegations to the UK. [60915]

Hilary Benn: Since 1998 the UK has committed £181 million to trade-related capacity building (TRCB) in developing countries to help developing countries to develop and implement trade policy, participate effectively in trade negotiations and increase exports and imports. Sub-Saharan African Governments of those countries where DFID works, can request assistance for sending trade delegations to the UK from the respective DFID bilateral country programme.

TRANSPORT

Buses (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bus services serving West Lancashire have operated after 7pm in each year since 1997. [61246]

Dr. Ladyman: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) only holds information on bus operators broken down by Traffic Area from 1 April 2003 onwards. Operators within the West Lancashire constituency cannot be differentiated from those in the rest of the North West Traffic Area without disproportionate cost.

Community Transport Initiatives

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to facilitate and encourage the operation of community transport initiatives under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 relating to the removal of unduly restrictive conditions; and if he will make a statement. [60251]

Dr. Ladyman: Officials have discussed with the Community Transport Association the areas of regulation that they believe are a barrier to the provision and expansion of community and voluntary transport. We hope to publish a consultation document outlining proposed changes later this year.

Electric Hybrid Motor Vehicles

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many electric hybrid motor vehicles were registered in *(a)* London, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* England in each of the last three years. [61161]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table shows the number of electric hybrid motor vehicles that were newly registered in London, Scotland and England from 2003 to 2005 according to the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency database.

	2003	*2004*	*2005*
London	118	320	1,024
Scotland	17	74	240
England	347	1,434	4,965

Emergencies

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what emergency coverage is available for vessels in the Irish Channel. [60276]

Dr. Ladyman: Emergency cover for vessels in the Irish Sea is provided by a combination of UK facilities which include:

7 Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres

122 Coastguard Rescue Teams

1 Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV), based in the Western Approaches

MoD Search and Rescue Helicopters bases at RNAS Culdrose and Prestwick and RAF Valley and Chivenor.

62 RNLI Lifeboats which are made up of a combination of Inshore and All Weather Lifeboats

An MoD Nimrod aircraft available at 2 hours notice

Full VHF Radio Coverage

4 Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG) Teams which provide a dedicated fire fighting at sea capability

In accordance with international agreements facilities are also provided through the governments of Ireland and the Isle of Man who work in co-operation with the UK authorities to ensure that the most appropriate assistance will be provided to any vessel in distress within the Irish Sea.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent estimate he has made of the number of British seafarers available to provide strategic support at times of national emergency; and if he will make a statement. [60273]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2208W, which describes the arrangements to provide strategic support for movements by sea at times of national emergency or on any other occasion. That answer also refers to the Department's monitoring of the numbers of UK seafarers, which is an annual analysis that is carried out by London Metropolitan University under a three year contract which is part funded by the Ministry of Defence.

The requirement is to estimate the number of UK seafarers in 2004, 2005 and 2006 in accordance with given seafarer definitions, classifications and characteristics.

The title of the most recent publication is "United Kingdom Seafarers Analysis 2004". The report is published in paper form and is also available for download from the Department's website, www.dft. gov.uk . The next analysis for the year 2005 is due to be published this spring.

Pensioners (Free Travel)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the timescale is for implementing the appropriate technology on buses to allow pensioners to travel free on buses in Lancashire; and if he will make a statement; [61267]

(2) when he expects pensioners to be able to travel free within their boroughs in Lancashire. [61268]

Dr. Ladyman: From 1 April this year, older and disabled people will be entitled to free off-peak travel within their local authority area. We are introducing a national scheme in April 2008 which will allow older and disabled people free off-peak bus travel anywhere in England. In the interim, we are keen for local authorities to work together to provide cross-boundary or countywide schemes. However, ultimately it is for local authorities to decide whether and how to make these arrangements.

Railway Franchises

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why his Department's tender document for the West of England franchise specifies a reduction in the number of trains calling at Totnes; and if he will make a statement. [55974]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 3 March 2006]*: The Great Western Franchise specification was designed to improve the overall operational and financial performance of the train service and to ensure resources were used to best meet market needs. The timetable on each route, including Totnes, is derived from these requirements.

Most passengers in the Great Western Franchise area will see the same or improved service. First's consultation on their draft timetable has now closed and First are in discussion with the Department to address stakeholder concerns. The proposed service at Totnes forms part of these discussions.

Road Improvements

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has allocated in road improvements in *(a)* each English region, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [59926]

Dr. Ladyman: A table has been placed in the Libraries of the House, showing funding by region, where funding was provided through the Local Transport Plan process, excluding London. We do not hold information centrally on a constituency by constituency basis.

The following table shows the Highways Agency's total expenditure since 1998–99. Information is not readily available for 1997–98 and is not routinely recorded by region or constituency.

£ million

	Amount
1998–99	1,355
1999–2000	1,389
2000–01	1,413
2001–02	1,548
2002–03	1,705
2003–04	1,479
2004–05	1,633

Note:

This information includes expenditure on roads in London until the creation of Transport for London in 2000. The later numbers do not include this expenditure, which is now a matter for the Mayor of London and the Greater London Assembly. The apparent decrease in spending between 2002–03 and 2003–04 is due to a change in accounting treatment of lands provisions.

Road Traffic Accidents (Wild Animals)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department takes to monitor roads which have a high incidence of collisions between motor vehicles and wild animals. [60462]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency (HA) is responsible for management and improvement of the trunk road and motorway network and is responsible for clearance of the highway following animal/vehicle collisions (AVCs).

The HA has undertaken research to prioritise implementation of mitigation measures to avoid such incidents. These include studies to review and prioritise implementation of otter protection measures and more recently a study to collate records of deer casualties in order to prioritise measures to prevent accidents. The latter was done in a partnership involving local highway authorities.

The HA is in the process of developing an environmental information system in which data on all AVC incidents will be held. This will inform improved targeting of preventative measures on the network in the future.

On local roads it would be for the respective local highway authorities to decide on what monitoring arrangements to have in place.

Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will bring forward legislation to require the installation of a seat belt reminder system in all new motor vehicles sold in the UK; and if he will make a statement; [60861]

(2) what research his Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* funded into the merits of installing a seat belt reminder system in all new motor vehicles sold in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [60862]

Dr. Ladyman: It would be inappropriate to introduce unilateral constructional requirements for all new motor vehicles sold in the UK, as any vehicle that conforms to European Type Approval requirements must be permitted to be placed on the market and used in the UK.

The UK already has a high proportion of seat belt wearing. Research has taken place in Sweden which suggests that seat belt reminders can significantly increase seat belt wearing rates. I have no plans to undertake or fund more research.

A number of passenger cars are already fitted with some form of seat belt reminder. Since 2002, this has been encouraged by the European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP), who award additional points to a vehicle fitted with a seat belt reminder that conforms to their protocol. About 75 per cent. of new models now being tested have them fitted.

Discussions are taking place within Europe to incorporate into the requirements for seat belts a specification for seat belt reminder systems based on the Euro NCAP protocol. In addition CARS 21 (Competitive Automotive Regulatory System for the 21st century) a high level group established by the European Commission, has recommended that the Commission bring forward a proposal to mandate seat belt reminders.

Speed Limits (Schools)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is on the use of low speed limits near schools only at times of day and on days when school children are crossing local roads. [61673]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department encourages local traffic authorities to consider introducing lower speed limits outside schools. They are best placed to decide whether variable speed limits or permanent speed limits are appropriate based on local needs and considerations and have the powers to introduce lower limits if they believe it appropriate to do so.

Transport Infrastructure (Norfolk)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding he has allocated for transport infrastructure in Norfolk in each of the last five years. [59618]

Dr. Ladyman: Spending on transport infrastructure within Norfolk over the last five years has taken place via the funding Norfolk receive as part of their Local Transport Plan settlement and the Highways Agency investment to support the strategic highway network within Norfolk. The following figures are the yearly allocations for local transport funding, comprising capital funding for integrated transport and the funding allocations for local transport major schemes within Norfolk.

£

	Amount
2005–06	9,700,000
2004–05	16,375,000
2003–04	11,588,000
2002–03	11,225,000
2001–02	15,546,000

These figures exclude the £95,953,000 capital funding that has been awarded to Norfolk over the last five years for highway maintenance.

The Highways Agency does not routinely report information on a regional basis and we, therefore, are unable to provide expenditure figures on either small schemes or maintenance. However, the following table provides the expenditure that has been spent on Highways Agency major schemes, costing over £5 million, in Norfolk in the last five years.

£ million

Project	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
A11 Roudham Heath—Attleborough improvement	4.28	12.70	10.29	0.00	0.00	0.00
A11 Attleborough Bypass	0.26	0.15	0.51	1.36	1.10	5.74
A11 Fiveways—Thetford improvement	0.20	0.10	1.55	-0.41	0.57	0.27
A47 Blofield to North Burlingham Dualling	—	—	0.61	-0.10	1.42	0.32
Total spend	4.74	12.95	12.96	0.85	3.09	6.33

[1] Indicates the position as at 31 December 2005.

Notes:

1. Values reflect the total value of additions in year. This includes all project costs including lands, capitalised salaries, accruals and provisions and adjustments for surplus properties.

2. The negative values in 2003–04 reflect a change made to the calculation of lands provisions in the year.

Transport Projects

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department takes to tackle optimism bias in transport project promoters' estimation of capital costs. [60592]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* The department is taking a number of steps to tackle the systematic tendency for promoters to be overly optimistic in estimating capital costs.

Firstly, to ensure that optimism bias is factored into decision making the department makes explicit adjustments to promoters' cost estimates within economic appraisal. The adjustments are empirically based (e.g. using data on cost overruns for transport projects in the past).

Secondly, the department is taking a number of steps to try to reduce optimism bias in the future. These include:

- Issuing improved guidance on cost estimation and risk assessment (including requiring a Quantitative Risk Assessment to be undertaken for all larger major schemes).
- More closely scrutinising promoters' cost estimates to ensure they are realistic and based on the latest cost information.
- Involving private sector contractors earlier in scheme development to help to better estimate costs, improve scheme design and to ensure that schemes are planned in a way that uses existing capacity effectively.
- Providing greater incentives for scheme promoters to produce realistic estimates of cost. This is achieved by only committing to fund risk-adjusted cost estimates excluding optimism bias and not automatically funding cost overruns.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department takes to ensure that traffic forecasts provided by project promoters are realistic. [60593]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* A range of appraisal information including assessments using the New Approach to Transport Appraisal system, is required alongside all schemes submitted to the department for funding. Traffic forecasts are used by scheme promoters as part of these appraisals. There is departmental guidance available to promoters, setting out the appropriate use of forecasting techniques, to ensure that traffic is realistically forecasted. The forecasts are checked by the promoters, such as the Highways Agency or other appropriate body, and by the department's modellers. The full appraisal is finally inspected by the department as part of the value for money assessment, to provide Ministers with advice on the case for a particular scheme.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the difference between demand forecasts used by promoters of *(a)* rail projects and *(b)* road projects in advance of building transport projects and the actual recorded demand. [60594]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* The Department, as a matter of routine, expects to assess the impacts arising from major transport schemes which it has supported against the forecasts originally made, in order to learn lessons for future schemes.

With regard to rail, the Department has been monitoring the usage of section one of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link against the original forecasts, as reported by the National Audit Office in their report "Progress on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link", published in July 2005. Further examples of similar evaluations are the studies regarding the Jubilee Line Extension and the Manchester and Sheffield Light Rail Schemes.

All Highways Agency schemes have been subject to some form of post-opening project evaluation, including a comparison of outturn demand against forecast, since 1981.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which major *(a)* road, *(b)* rail and *(c)* other schemes approved since 1997 have assessed future patronage or traffic levels based on (i) a fixed trip matrix and (ii) other forecast models. [60595]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* The Department does not ordinarily compile information on the modelling technique used by external promoters in assessing future patronage; to compile a list of schemes on this basis would be prohibitively expensive. However, scheme promoters are expected to use appropriate techniques in the appraisals of a project, using the guidance published by the Department.

Since 1997, of some sixty Highways Agency road schemes that have been approved, around 90 per cent. were appraised using a fixed trip matrix method to assess future traffic levels; a similar proportion would be expected for local authority major road schemes. The 'elasticity' approach has been the alternative used in larger schemes. This technique models the growth in traffic induced by the completion of a transport improvement—something a fixed trip matrix would not do. The Department for Transport has recently published guidance for road scheme promoters to encourage greater use of improved 'variable demand' appraisal techniques. All rail schemes are assessed using an 'elasticity' approach. In the largest schemes, affecting a number of modes, full multi-modal studies are conducted which would better articulate modal change as well as induced traffic.

Traveline

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the new Traveline services for providing travellers with details of travel by public transport. [60947]

Dr. Ladyman: Traveline was launched during summer 2000, and is managed and funded by local authorities and transport operators.

During 2001–2002 the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions funded on behalf of Traveline three 'mystery shopping' exercises, to assess levels of accuracy and customer service provided. Traveline has continued to fund a further five waves of mystery shopping and will continue with the research for the foreseeable future. Each wave has indicated that the Traveline service has significantly improved in all regions since the first wave of mystery shopping was carried out. The time taken to answer calls and the customer service elements of the calls are generally satisfactory or good, with all scoring 90 per cent. or more in the last wave. Overall 97 per cent. of the answers given were completely accurate and the results show an improvement across the regions.

The Department for Transport funded a research project in 2003 to assess effective future delivery of Traveline to the customer. As a result of the research Traveline has extended its future minimum opening hours; has identified the requirements for existing Traveline customers; and has established the extent of information that needs to be given by the Traveline service. The recommendations and decisions on changes to the future Traveline service following research are made by Traveline.

Traveline currently receives over four million calls a year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Italian government was informed of the re-export of a shipment of Beretta semi-automatic pistols by Super Vision International Ltd. of London before they were transferred to Iraq. [60940]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government contribute information on their export licensing decisions, by destination, to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (COARM) Report. There was otherwise no obligation on the Government to inform any other member state about its export licensing decision in this case.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the 20,878 semi-automatic pistols exported to Iraq referred to in the Second Quarterly Strategic Export Controls Report 2004 *(a)* had been granted an earlier import permit by his Department, *(b)* were subject to post-export checks and *(c)* arrived in Iraq. [59990]

Malcolm Wicks: I can confirm that the items in question were granted a UK import licence.

The goods were received by the Joint Contracting Office in Iraq and were distributed by them to the Iraqi Police, Ministry of Oil, and Security Forces.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether evidence has been given to him that a British shipment of arms to Iraq has been diverted for illicit purposes; and if he will make a statement. [60999]

Malcolm Wicks: No such evidence has been presented to me.

Cable and Wireless

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the minutes of the meeting in July 2005 between the Minister of State for Trade and Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, in his capacity as Deputy Chairman of Cable and Wireless. [53326]

Ian Pearson: The notes of the meeting will be published on the DTI website (www.dti.gov.uk). These will be subject to the necessary redactions reflecting the sensitivities (both in relation to the commercial interests of Cable and Wireless and international relations between the UK and other administrations) of some of the issues discussed.

Carbon Emissions

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate his Department has made of the total life-cycle carbon cost of *(a)* solar, *(b)* tidal, *(c)* wind and *(d)* nuclear power per GWh-generated. [60911]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department is aware of a number of studies estimating the total life-cycle emissions and carbon costs of different generation technologies.

In November 2005 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that there would be a review of energy policy which would report in summer 2006. This will involve reviewing the existing evidence on the total life-cycle carbon costs of options for meeting the Government's long-term targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Corporate Behaviour

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many investigations have been launched by his Department in each of the last five years into British companies suspected of flouting guidelines on *(a)* corporate and social responsibility and *(b)* corruption. [55511]

Malcolm Wicks: No investigations have been launched.

Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are for guidance only. The UK Government do not have the power to investigate companies which flout various guidelines on CSR, including voluntary initiatives to combat corruption overseas and the OECD Guidelines on multinational enterprises.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the merits of establishing clear and binding international human rights standards for corporations. [58801]

Alun Michael: There are currently no binding international agreements on international human rights standards for corporations. However, in 2005, the UN Secretary-General, at the request of the Commission of Human Rights, appointed a special representative to look at the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises—a final report is due to be presented to the Commission in 2007.

The UK will continue to promote several voluntary schemes that provide clear international human rights standards for corporations. These include the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives, Global Compact and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines.

Departmental Policies

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Islington, South and Finsbury constituency, the effects on Islington, South and Finsbury of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [60734]

Alun Michael: The London Development Agency is provided with funds from DTI to provide co-ordinated regional economic development and regeneration, to reduce economic imbalances which exist within the capital and to improve competitiveness. The LDA also administer a variety of grants to businesses.

Through the London Development Agency we provide funding for Business Link for London. Business Link provides London's small business community with impartial and comprehensive advice to help them start and grow and develop their businesses. Business Link for London, last year they helped over 90,000 businesses in the capital and achieved a 90 per cent. customer satisfaction rating.

Specific information relating to the Islington, South and Finsbury constituency is difficult to collate, but since 1997 there has been an 8 per cent. increase in the number of VAT registered businesses stock within the borough of Islington.

Different by Design

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what public funding has been *(a)* allocated to and *(b)* spent on the Different by Design programme in the West Midlands. [60726]

Alun Michael: Different by Design was allocated £2.7 million in February 2003 by Advantage West Midlands (the West Midlands Regional Development Agency). Spend to date is £1,609,901.

Directors' Reports

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress his Department has made with implementing new rules on directors' reports. [60905]

Alun Michael: Following the discussion not to proceed with a mandatory requirement for an Operating and Financial Review, we have invited views on narrative business reporting requirements for the future, with a closing date for responses of 24 March. This consultation has provided an opportunity for all interested parties, including companies and investors, to express their views on all options and relevant issues. The Government will announce its conclusions following consideration of the responses to the consultation and intends to bring forward amendments to reflect any resulting policy changes during the appropriate Parliamentary stages of the Company Law Reform Bill.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the costs incurred by *(a)* businesses and *(b)* his Department on the Companies Act 1985 (OFR and Directors' Report) Regulations 2005. [60912]

Alun Michael: The Government assessed the costs of implementing a statutory Operating and Financial Review against those of implementing an enhanced Business Review in a Regulatory Impact Assessment, which was published alongside the DTI's formal response to consultation. It was estimated that a statutory Operating and Financial Review would cost business £33 million per annum more than the Business Review. Most of these additional costs related to the different audit requirements applying to the OFR compared to the Business Review. As the Business

Review and OFR reporting requirements are similar, work already undertaken on the preparation of the OFR will be useful in the preparation of the Business Review.

The costs incurred by the department relate to the work of the relevant Departmental officials and have not been separately calculated. The Regulations covered the business review requirements necessary to implement the EU Accounts Modernisation Directive as well as the mandatory OFR provisions. Only the latter are affected by the announcement in November and the consultation that has just closed.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from small and medium sized companies on the implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [60744]

Malcolm Wicks: In July 2005, the Government launched a formal consultation to seek views on proposals for consideration for Phase II of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). 232 written responses were received, the majority of which were from operators in the EU ETS. These responses have not been analysed by size of organisation.

The Government will shortly be publishing their response to the consultation, together with an analysis of the responses prepared by independent consultants.

Energy Market

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to counter volatility in the energy market. [60635]

Malcolm Wicks: The recent volatility in gas and electricity prices is driven by the current tight supply/demand balance and the general uncertainty in the market over the winter months. The Government have been pursuing a number of avenues to reduce this tightness and improve the operation of the market. We have talked to the North sea gas producers, and the operators and capacity owners of the Bacton-Zeebrugge Interconnector and the Isle of Grain Liquefied Natural Gas import terminal, in order to maximise supplies over the winter. We have encouraged end users, particularly gas-fired power stations and other energy intensive industrial consumers, to respond to price signals by reducing demand and switching to alternative fuels where possible. We have sought to improve the operation of the market by making more information available on a timely basis through the voluntary agreement with the offshore industry, and by encouraging the Futures and Options Association to develop an action plan for improving the liquidity of the gas and electricity markets.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government is taking to liberalise the energy market. [60630]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK energy market is one of the most liberalised in the world. The UK is giving the European Commission our full support to ensure that EU energy markets are also open and competitive. As the Chancellor noted in his budget speech, incomplete liberalisation of EU energy markets is a factor in high gas prices and at the Spring European Council the UK will propose that the energy and other sectors which fail to liberalise and open up to Competition should be subject to independent investigation and enforcement. This work has been ongoing in the energy sector for some time; the Commission launched a sector inquiry into EU gas and electricity markets in June 2005 and the UK gave this prominence during our Presidency of the EU in the second half of last year. The Commission recently reported the preliminary findings of this inquiry and identified a number of areas of concern. We expect the Commission to remedy the defects it has found.

EU Directives/Regulations

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the EU directives on restrictions on hazardous substances and waste electrical and electronic equipment on the *(a)* manufacture, *(b)* refurbishment and *(c)* maintenance of traditional pipe organs; and if he will make a statement. [60741]

Malcolm Wicks: The restriction of hazardous substances directive will restrict the amount of lead and five other substances in electronic musical instruments put on the market after 30 June this year, although an exemption for the lead in the solder of the electronic components of musical instruments having a lifespan in excess of 10 years is currently under consideration by the European Commission.

Pipe organs that do not rely on electricity to operate would not be caught within the scope of this directive. The directive will not have an impact on the refurbishment or maintenance of any existing organs, whether they have electronic components or not.

The waste electrical and electronic equipment directive will not have any impact whatsoever on the manufacture, refurbishment or maintenance of traditional pipe organs.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the costs to *(a)* businesses and *(b)* his Department of the implementation of the (i) Low Voltage Directive, (ii) Measuring Instruments (Automatic Catchweighers) Regulations, (iii) Measuring Instruments (Automatic Discontinuous Totalisers) Regulations and (iv) Measuring Instruments (Automatic Gravimetric Filling Instruments) Regulations. [60910]

Barry Gardiner: The information is as follows:

(i) Low Voltage Directive

The Low Voltage Directive was last amended in 1993, implementing Regulations being made in 1994 (Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994—S.1.1994/3260). At that time a Cost Compliance Assessment was carried out. The annual recurring costs to business were estimated to be £3.5 million (0.0125 per cent. of the estimated industry turnover). The impact on recurring costs to the Department was negligible.

(ii) Measuring Instruments (Automatic Catchweighers) Regulations, (iii) Measuring Instruments (Automatic Discontinuous Totalisers) Regulations, (iv) Measuring Instruments (Automatic Gravimetric Filling Instruments) Regulations.

Each of these Regulations is expected to be cost neutral to businesses. There will be a 10 year derogation for existing designs. The costs of verification and certification of new weighing instruments for the UK market will be very similar to the current ones, but certification and verification costs to companies exporting to the EU and EEA will be reduced. The costs to the Department are £60,000 for each Regulation, £180,000 in total.

Low Carbon Building Programme

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who will manage the Low Carbon Building Programme on behalf of his Department; when the first round of the programme is expected to be announced; and when community organisations will be able to submit applications to round one of the programme. [60845]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* The contract for programme management of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme has been awarded to the Energy Saving Trust in partnership with the Building Research Establishment.

The first competition for small-scale community projects will be launched in May.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total funding allocation is to the Carbon Trust from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme; and how much of the allocation is planned to support *(a)* the promotion of micro-renewable technologies and *(b)* the provision of advice on energy efficiency. [60884]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* None of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme budget will be funding the Carbon Trust. The Carbon Trust are contributing £5 million from their budget to provide support and advice on combining micro generation technologies with energy efficiency in order to create a low carbon building. This will focus on large-scale applications in the programme, and will include providing a carbon manager for every large-scale project that is awarded a grant.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget is for grant allocations from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme in *(a)* 2006–07, *(b)* 2007–08 and *(c)* 2008–09. [60885]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* Of the initial budget of £30 million the allocation across the three years of the programme is as follows.

(a) £11 million

(b) £9.5 million

(c) £5.5 million

On 23 March the Budget 2006 announced an additional £50 million for the programme. The Department will be considering urgently with Treasury colleagues how this money should be allocated.

Merlin Biosciences

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has met *(a)* Sir Christopher Evans and *(b)* representatives of Merlin Biosciences Ltd. on official business in the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [61479]

Barry Gardiner: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has not met Sir Christopher Evans or representatives of Merlin Biosciences Ltd. on official business in the past 12 months.

Post Office Card Account

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on incomes of sub-post offices in the Vale of York of the withdrawal of the Post Office Card Account in 2010. [59009]

Barry Gardiner: The future levels of post office incomes of sub post offices across the network will depend on many factors including the outcome of ongoing discussions between Post Office Ltd and Department for Work and Pensions on what accounts, other than the Post Office card account, will be available after 2010.

Small Businesses

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received *(a)* from and *(b)* on behalf of small businesses about the coherence of programmes of advice and assistance for small businesses. [60727]

Alun Michael: We have received a range of representations concerning the programmes of advice and assistance for small businesses some of which reflect the wish of Ministers to make support for business much simpler and easier to obtain. The CBI's report "Improving Government Services to Small and Growing Businesses", published in January 2006, demonstrated the CBI's support of the Government's objective to ensure services to businesses become more coherent. A report from the Federation of Small Businesses published this month, showed that only 4 per cent. of its members who responded to the survey used the help available from the Business Link network yet 96 per cent. of those who actually use the service would recommend it to a friend—so there is clearly a gap between perception and reality.

During November 2005, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants informed the DTI of its concerns with the Government's wider business support agenda and Small Business Service officials recently met the Association to discuss these issues.

Ministers believe that the proliferation of business support schemes has created a complex picture that makes it difficult and time consuming for businesses to gain access to relevant support and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has set in train a process of deproliferation. We will work with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and other local and national bodies to reduce the number of business support services from around 3,000 now, to no more than 100 by 2010. The DTI's Small Business Service will spearhead this cross-Government programme and will engage with a wide range of key stakeholders, including the CBI and ACCA. An announcement of this programme was formally presented in the 2006 Budget report.

Sustainable Development Commission

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evaluation processes he plans to use to assess the contents and conclusions of the report, "Is Nuclear the Answer?", published by the Sustainable Development Commission on 6 March. [60617]

Malcolm Wicks: I welcome the Sustainable Development Commission's analysis and background papers as an important contribution to the debate we are having as part of the Energy Review.

The Energy Review will take account of the Sustainable Development Commission's analysis, together with other stakeholder contributions and responses to our consultation.

Telephone Service Providers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many telephone service providers have had more than 50 complaints made against them for potential breach of Telephone Preference Service regulations. [61260]

Alun Michael: The Information Commissioner is responsible for administering the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. Regulation 21 of these Regulations relates to unsolicited direct marketing telephone calls. Where a complaint is made about a potential breach of Regulation 21, the alleged breach is considered to have been committed by the instigator of the marketing call rather than the telephone service provider who has provided the service by which the call was made. While the Commissioner's Office have received complaints about potential breaches of Regulation 21 which have allegedly been committed by organisations that would be classed as telephone service providers, the nature of the casework management system used makes it impossible to identify the number of telephone service providers about which the ICO has received more than 50 complaints. They are looking to develop this function in their casework management system in the future.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints have been made *(a)* through the Direct Marketing Association and *(b)* directly by members of the public against telephone service providers for potential breach of Telephone Preference Service regulations. [61261]

Alun Michael: The Information Commissioner is responsible for administering the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. Regulation 21 of these Regulations relates to unsolicited direct marketing telephone calls. Where a complaint is made to the Information Commissioner's Office about a potential breach of Regulation 21, the alleged breach is considered to have been committed by the instigator of the marketing call rather than the telephone service provider who has provided the service by which the call was made.

The Information Commissioner receives complaints directly from individual and corporate subscribers regarding alleged breaches of Regulation 21. He does not receive complaints through the Direct Marketing Association and the Association does not itself log complaints but refers them to the Information Commissioner.

Due to the nature of the casework management system used by the Information Commissioner's Office they are at present unable to identify the number of complaints received about a particular sector of industry such as telephone service providers. The casework management system used can be used only to identify the number of complaints received about a particular named organisation or the total number of complaints received about alleged breaches of Regulation 21.1 am informed by the Information Commissioner that direct complaints received and dealt with about alleged breaches of Regulation 21 were as follows:

	2004	*2005*
Q1	28	336
Q2	44	397
Q3	213	184
Q4	308	96

Figures before 2004 are not available due to the casework management system previously operated by the Commissioner's Office.

WEEE Directive

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the likely value of penalties to be applied to the UK by the EU for delays in implementing the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [60901]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government anticipates implementing the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive within a timescale that would avoid the application of penalties.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funds have been made available for adult education courses in Peterborough in 2005–06; and what percentage change this represents from the previous year. [45466]

Bill Rammell: The Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government. In 2005–06 we plan to spend £2,851 million on the main education and training programmes for adults, an increase of £183 million or 7 per cent. on the comparable figure for 2004–05. The Department does not hold figures for adult education funding at local level. Mark

Haysom, the council's chief executive, has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment the Learning and Skills Council has made of the socio-economic status of adult learners in *(a)* further education and *(b)* adult and community learning in the academic year (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05. [58884]

Phil Hope *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* I am not aware of any assessment undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) of the socio-economic status of adult learners. Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive has written to my hon. Friend with further information and a copy of his letter has been placed in the House Library.

Care Leavers

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people in Essex who left care in 2005 stayed *(a)* in their own dwellings, *(b)* with friends or family, *(c)* in foyer accommodation, *(d)* in hostels and *(e)* in bed and breakfast accommodation. [59175]

Maria Eagle: The Department will be releasing national and local authority level figures on looked after children in a Statistical Volume on 30 March 2006. Figures for looked after children aged 16 and over will be available on the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000646/index.html.

National and local authority figures for all children looked after will be available after this date.

I will write to the hon. Member and provide him with the available information he has requested immediately thereafter.

Departmental Entertainment

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department's entertainment allowance is for 2005–06; what rules govern its use; and if she will make a statement. [59812]

Bill Rammell: The Department adheres to guidance on financial procedures and propriety for expenditure on official entertainment which are based on the principles set out in Government Accounting. While there is no separate departmental allowance for entertainment, the guidance states that approval must be sought in advance from the appropriate director or board member for all entertainment expenses. The Department's provisional outturn for expenditure on entertainment for 2005–06 is £35,000.

Departmental Finance

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of financial irregularities have been recorded in her Department in each of the last five financial years; and if she will make a statement. [57550]

Bill Rammell: The Department does not separately identify losses which are due to financial irregularities and this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Department has data for the last four financial years which relate to frauds incurring an identified loss. This has been extracted from the annual departmental return to Treasury, which is used to inform the Treasury Fraud Report. The records held by the Department cover years 2001/02 to 2004/05.

	Number of cases
2001/02	7
2002/03	14
2003/04	7
2004/05	4
Total	32

Kent County Council (Education)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she last commissioned an audit of Kent county council's education department. [61103]

Jacqui Smith: The most recent inspections of Kent education services were an Ofsted inspection of the local education authority which reported in October 2000, and the 2005 annual performance assessment of the authority's children's services by Ofsted and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. A joint area review of children's services in Kent, by Ofsted and other inspectorates and commissions, will take place in financial year 2007–08.

Ofsted Inspectors

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Ofsted inspectors are from ethnic minority backgrounds; and if she will make a statement. [59512]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM chief inspector, Maurice Smith, has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children with special educational needs in England are on a school action plan. [58947]

Maria Eagle: The following table shows information on pupils in maintained primary, secondary and special schools and non-maintained special schools who are supported at School Action and School Action Plus as part of the graduated approach to meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs (SEN). The table also shows children with SEN but without statements who attend maintained nursery schools, Pupil Referral Units and independent schools.

Number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) without statements by type of school—January 2005—England

	Number and percentage
All schools[1]:	
SEN provision—School Action	801,960
SEN provision—School Action Plus	365,810
SEN provision—stage unknown	63,020
Pupils with SEN without statements	1,230,800
Pupils on roll	8,274,320
Incidence (percentage)[2]	14.9
Maintained schools:	
Nursery[3]	
Pupils with SEN without statements	4,110
Pupils on roll	37,410
Incidence (percentage)[2]	11.0
Placement (percentage)[4]	0.3
Primary	
SEN provision—School Action	468,480
SEN provision—School Action Plus	224,000
Pupils with SEN without statements	692,480
Pupils on roll	4,204,500
Incidence (percentage)[2]	16.5
Placement (percentage)[4]	56.3
Secondary	
SEN provision—School Action	333,250
SEN provision—School Action Plus	140,260
Pupils with SEN without statements	473,510
Pupils on roll	3,316,050
Incidence (percentage)[2]	14.3
Placement (percentage)[4]	38.5
Special[1]	
SEN provision—School Action	230
SEN provision—School Action Plus	1,520
Pupils with SEN without statements	1,750
Pupils on roll	85,350
Incidence (percentage)[2]	2.1
Placement (percentage)[4]	0.1
Pupil Referral Units[3,5,6]	
Pupils with SEN without statements	6,540
Pupils on roll	14,470
Incidence (percentage)[2]	45.2
Placement (percentage)[4]	0.5
Other schools:	
Independent[3,7]	
Pupils with SEN without statements	52,370
Pupils on roll	611,670
Incidence (percentage)[2]	8.6
Placement (percentage)[4]	4.3
Non-maintained special[5]	
SEN provision—School Action	10
SEN provision—School Action Plus	30
Pupils with SEN without statements	40
Pupils on roll	4,870
Incidence (percentage)[2]	0.8
Placement (percentage)[4]	0.0

[1] Excludes general hospital schools. Data for pupils with SEN without statements are not collected from these schools.

[2] Incidence of pupils—the number of pupils with SEN without statements expressed as a proportion of pupils on roll.

[3] Information on stage of SEN is not collected from maintained nursery schools, pupil referral units and independent schools.

[4] Placement of pupils—the number of pupils with SEN without statements expressed as a proportion of pupils with SEN without statements in all schools.

[5] Excludes dually registered pupils.

[6] Includes pupils with other providers.

[7] Including Direct Grant Nursery schools, City Technology Colleges and Academies.

Note:

Totals may not appear to equal the sum of the component parts because numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual Schools Census.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the London Development Agency and Newsfax International with regard to the Olympic compulsory purchase area. [61109]

Mr. Caborn: Neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor I have had any such discussions with the London Development Agency or Newsfax International.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter dated 8 February from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Paul Buckles. [60007]

James Purnell: I understand my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State replied to my right hon. Friend's letter on the 20 March 2006.

England Commonwealth Games Team

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much financial subsidy was given to the England Commonwealth games team. [61221]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Londonderry (Mr. Campbell) on 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 480–81W.

Films

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding from the UK Film Council has been allocated to *(a)* DNA Films, *(b)* The Film Consortium and *(c)* Pathé Productions in each of the last five years. [60002]

James Purnell: The UK Film Council was set up in 2000 and took over administration and funding of the existing Arts Council England (ACE) franchises' contractual agreements. Funding has been allocated over the past five years as follows:

	The Film Consortium	*Pathé Productions*	*DNA*
2001	3,253,202	3,588,072	4,401,400
2002	7,574,906	4,813,180	225,000
2003	4,425,897	10,657,799	1,684,089
2004	—	—	466,667
2005	—	—	13,793,611
Total	15,254,005	19,059,051	20,570,767

The Film Consortium and Pathé Productions had spent their allocations by 2003, so have no spending showing in 2004 or 2005.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many films were made by *(a)* DNA Films, *(b)* Pathé and *(c)* The Film Consortium using the £95.67 million funding from the Arts Council between 1997 and 2003; and how many of them made a profit. [60003]

James Purnell: 51 feature films were made by DNA Films, Pathé Productions and The Film Consortium using funding from the Arts Council England's film franchises between 1997 and 2003. The total worldwide box office generated by these films to date is in excess of £150 million.

Many of these films generated box office in excess of their production costs. As the UK Film Council does not have access to the details of the films' individual marketing spend worldwide or the revenues generated worldwide from their continued exploitation through video, DVD and television medium, it is not possible to calculate any profit made by these films.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many films which have received funding from the UK Film Council in the last 10 years have *(a)* broken even, *(b)* made a profit and *(c)* made a loss. [60004]

James Purnell: Since, the UK Film Council was set up in 2000, it has funded 117 films. While many of these films generated box office in excess of their production costs, the UK Film Council does not have access to the details of the films' individual marketing spend worldwide or the revenues generated worldwide from their continued exploitation through video, DVD and television. This information would be needed before the break-even point of a film could be calculated.

Financial Irregularities

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the answer of 17 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2520W, on financial irregularities, how much was involved in each case. [60855]

Mr. Lammy: The information is in the following table.

Financial year	*Financial irregularities*	*Costs (£)*
2000–01	0	0
2001–02	1	1,823
2002–03	2	3,200 and 1,100
2003–04	[1]1	[2]40,000
2004–05	0	0

[1] In the RPA.

[2] This case was identified during 2003–04, which may have been ongoing for several years. The cost was an estimate of the maximum loss.

FM Radio Contracts

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what assessment she has made of the recent decision by the Office of Communication to award the new FM radio contract for Plymouth to Diamond FM, an Australian-based company, in preference to bids from local companies; and whether she plans to intervene; [60074]

(2) what powers she has to set aside or amend decisions made by the Office of Communications on the awarding of FM radio contracts. [60076]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* These are matters for Ofcom under legislation. They have published an assessment of the winning application.

Museums/Galleries

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will encourage public museums and galleries to co-operate by making available exhibits to other museums and galleries; and if she will make a statement. [61431]

Mr. Lammy: By 2008 we will have invested almost £150 million in the Renaissance in the Regions programme which is transforming regional museums across England. That investment has already helped to strengthen partnership working, loans and shared exhibitions between regional and national museums and will continue to do so.

My Department's joint programme of Strategic Commissioning with the DfES also supports loans and exhibitions which benefit young people and communities, including for example an educational project involving the Lewis Chessmen from the British Museum, which will by the end of this year have been exhibited in Tyne and Wear, Exeter, Hampshire, Leicester, Lincoln and Luton.

In addition, the Government Indemnity Scheme already provides encouragement for the lending of works between museums within the UK, as well as for the borrowing of works from abroad and from private collections worldwide.

National Lottery

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what account is taken of levels of deprivation in particular areas in allocating Lottery grants. [61097]

Mr. Caborn: Distributors of National Lottery funding are required to comply with relevant legislation and policy directions issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. These differ for each distributor but generally require them to take into account the scope for reducing economic and social deprivation at the same time as creating benefits for the sector in which they operate.

The largest programme to address deprivation has been "fair share", operated by the former Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund. With a total value of £179 million, including a £50 million 10-year expendable endowment, many rural areas, former coalfield areas and seaside towns have already benefited.

National Sports Foundation

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of the funding announcement of £34 million for a new national sports foundation will be allocated to Wales. [61671]

Mr. Caborn: The National Sports Foundation will not allocate funding to Wales as its remit covers England only.

Pornography

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with the Home Office about the availability of pornography in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [60816]

James Purnell: DCMS officials along with colleagues at the Home Office and the Department of Trade and Industry held a meeting on 8 March with representatives of the trade associations of magazine retailers and wholesalers about the sale, display and placement in shops of magazines and other publications containing sexual material. As a result, the trade associations will be reminding their members that some material can cause offence, and that they should be mindful of the sensitivities of some customers and particularly the need to safeguard the interests of children when deciding what to stock and how to display it.

The availability of pornographic material on film and video, or broadcast is governed by the Obscene Publications Act 1959, the Video Recordings Act 1984 and the Communications Act 2003.

Sustainable Building

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of her Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the 2004–05 financial year. [58757]

Mr. Lammy: The Department has not allocated any of its building programme budget to either *(a)* energy self-generation or *(b)* water recycling measures in the last financial year. The Department, however, is committed to achieve the targets under the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate Part C Water and Part E Energy.

In order to achieve these targets, the Department has developed an energy strategy, which involves identifying potential savings through effective procurement; monitoring and targeting our consumption by analysing data; carrying out energy surveys of usage; capital investment in energy saving measures such as time controls; and an awareness campaign amongst staff led by the Department's team of environmental champions.

The Department is also taking advantage of the planned refurbishment of its Cockspur Street offices to incorporate energy efficient measures such as passive infra red lighting controls.

The Department is already supplied by 100 per cent. renewable energy.

Television Licence

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will fund a concessionary television licence fee for refuge centres that shelter women and children from domestic violence. [57195]

James Purnell: As indicated in the BBC Charter Review White Paper published on 14 March, responses to last year's Green Paper consultation identified a range of groups with a case for concessionary TV licences, pensioners below the age of 75; people on low incomes; partially sighted people; students; people in hostels for homeless people; members of the armed services; and catering staff in communal accommodation. However, there was no clear consensus on how such concessions should be allocated or funded and the White Paper therefore proposes no changes to the existing concessions. The draft Charter and Agreement was published along with the White Paper and as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made clear there is the possibility of representations on all these issues.

UKworldheritage Site

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on the www.ukworldheritage.org.uk site in each of the past five years; and how many hits the site received in each of these years. [61660]

Mr. Lammy: www.ukworldheritage.org.uk was set up in November 2004. The site was developed in-house using existing resources. The only maintenance cost is the price of the domain name, which is £20 every two years.

Unique visitor numbers to the site are as follows:

2004—77

2005—4,211.

PRIME MINISTER

Official Guests (Chequers)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the guests he has officially entertained at Chequers since 1 May 2005. [59410]

The Prime Minister: A list of those who have attended official dinners at Chequers since May 2005 is set out as follows:

25 June 2005

Sir Ewan Harper CBE
Lady Jenny Harper
Professor Sir Ara Darzi KBE
Lady Darzi
Mr. Steve Knight
Ms Catherine Neale
Mr. Richard Granger
Mrs. Gabrielle Granger
Mr. Paul Evans
Mrs. Karen Evans
Ms Naomi Eisenstadt CB
Mr. Michael Moutrie
The right hon. John Hutton MP

Mrs. Heather Hutton
Mr. Martin Newlands
Mrs. Benedicte Newlands

10 December 2005

Mr. Mark Hurd
Mrs. Paula Hurd
Mr. Lee Scott
Mrs. Linda Scott
The right hon. David Miliband MP
Ms Louise Shackleton
Lord Coe KBE
Ms Carole Annett
Mr. Anthony Minghella CBE
Ms Carolyn Choa
Dr. Beverley Malone
Ms Barbara Stocking CBE
Dr. John McInnes
Mr. John O'Farrell
Mrs. Jackie O'Farrell

4 February 2006

The right hon. Hazel Blears MP
Mr. Michael Hasall
Mr. Brian Barwick
Mrs. Geraldine Barwick
Mr. John Sunderland
Sir Terry Leahy
Lady Leahy
Professor Michael Richards CBE
Professor Phil Redmond CBE
Mrs. Alexis Redmond
Mrs. Jeanie Sunderland
Ms Nancy Hallett OBE

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Flu

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether arrangements are being made for poultry producers to be compensated in the event of their flocks contracting avian influenza. [61559]

Mr. Bradshaw: Compensation is payable under the Animal Health Act 1981 (as amended) for healthy birds that are compulsorily slaughtered for avian influenza disease control purposes.

H5N1

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received on the length of time that H5N1 was present in each infected EU country before it was discovered. [60771]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information currently available from EU countries affected by H5N1 does not include the length of time that the virus was present before detection.

We remain in close contact with our EU counterparts as we continue to monitor the situation.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received on the *(a)* likelihood and *(b)* implications of H5N1 reaching the game farms of the Loire Valley. [60772]

Mr. Bradshaw: The game farms of the Loire Valley could be exposed to H5N1 infection from wild birds during the spring migration. So far, however, there is no evidence of the virus in the region.

France has taken measures across the whole country to prevent infection entering poultry flocks including game farms. This includes surveillance of wild birds in order to detect H5N1as rapidly as possible.

If avian influenza was confirmed, or even strongly suspected, in wild birds or poultry, then trade in live birds from the affected zone would stop. The extent of any ban would depend on the precise circumstances, but the restricted area would have a radius of at least 10km and remain in place for at least 30 days. Any birds already imported would be traceable if the required records have been kept.

Because of the large number of live bird imports and the recent cases of H5N1 in France, the chief veterinary officer (CVO) for the UK has raised concerns with the European Commission and the French CVO. In response, we have received additional written assurances that France is carrying out surveillance on game farms and enforcing the same rules on biosecurity that apply to poultry holdings.

Biofuels

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to increase the amount of set-aside farmland used for biofuel crops. [58369]

Mr. Morley: We recognise the opportunities that set-aside land can offer biofuel crops. Farmers can receive the Single Payment for oilseed rape and wheat on set-aside land when grown under contract as a biofuel crop. Sugar beet will soon be eligible to receive the same support. However, biofuel crops are not the only potential use for set-aside and in some situations, other vegetation cover may provide more suitable environmental benefits.

Bovine TB

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many responses her Department received on the recent consultation into controlling the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle in high incidence areas in England. [61141]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department received approximately 35,000 responses.

Carbon-free Status

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what Government assistance is available to parish and town councils to move towards carbon-free status. [59056]

Mr. Morley: The Government funded Energy Saving Trust (EST) offers a range of services to parish and town councils to help them to engage their communities and deliver carbon emission reductions. This includes: 'Practical Help', an integrated help and advice service that acts as a channel for all EST support programmes.

The Community Action for Energy programme (CAfE) which facilitates and supports community-based sustainable energy projects and promotes partnerships to help build community-based energy projects.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to issue guidance to local authorities on the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. [60219]

Mr. Bradshaw: In week commencing 27 March 2006 the guidance on the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act will be sent to all local authorities and will also be available on Defra's local environmental quality website www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/index.htm.

Climate Change (Waste Management)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which recommendations of the report 'Potential impacts of climate change on waste management' have been implemented by her Department; which recommendations she plans to pursue; which recommendations have been rejected; and if she will make a statement. [60712]

Mr. Bradshaw: 'Potential impacts of climate change on waste management' was commissioned by the Environment Agency to inform its policy and process development. This technical report makes a welcome addition to the evidence base, but it is for the Environment Agency to decide how to respond to its recommendations.

Coastal and Marine Resources Atlas

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 517–18W, on the Coastal and Marine Resources Atlas, what the estimated costs are of maintaining the online Coastal and Marine Resources Atlas over the next three years. [60768]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Coastal and Marine Resources Atlas, launched in January 2006, uses the infrastructure and resources of the wider MAGIC project; which provides geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations on the web (www.magic.gov.uk). The cost of maintaining MAGIC did not increase when it was extended to include the marine atlas. The additional effort to maintain the marine and coastal data layers on-line over the next three years (approximately one third of a man year) is being absorbed within existing resources.

Disposable Plastic Shopping Bags

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to reduce the use of disposable plastic shopping bags. [60887]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* Government has been looking at ways of reducing the usage of disposal plastic shopping bags by encouraging reuse. Last Autumn, WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme) conducted a 'Reusable Bag' campaign trial, which took place in Bristol and Edinburgh in association with supermarket retailers, Defra, the Scottish Executive, the British Retail Consortium and the Scottish Waste Awareness Group. Customers were asked to "Choose to reuse" any kind of durable shopping bag for their supermarket shop, and remember to bring it with them to store, in an effort to curb carrier bag take-up. WRAP are hoping to publish the results of the campaign by Easter.

Electric Shock Collars

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the Department's review of electric shock collars for dogs to be completed; and if she will place the conclusions in the Library when they are available. [60785]

Mr. Bradshaw: New evidence may soon be available to inform our review and help us decide whether we need to re-advertise a DEFRA research call. The conclusions will be placed in the Library of the House and made publicly available.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to improve energy efficiency in public buildings, with particular reference to dealing with appliances left on standby. [57228]

Mr. Morley: The Government's approach is to set targets for carbon reduction or energy efficiency in key operational areas whilst allowing public bodies the flexibility in terms of the mechanisms used to deliver those targets. The Government also provides support and advice to public sector organisations through mechanisms such as the Carbon Trust, a private company funded by Government, which takes the lead on public sector carbon reduction. The Trust can provide support and practical advice on a range of measures (which includes no and low cost measures such as not leaving equipment on standby) to help them meet their commitments.

Energy Saving (Council Tax Discounts)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the council tax discounts in her Department's energy saving scheme are financed by *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local authorities. [59181]

Mr. Morley: This Department does not offer council tax discounts through any energy efficiency scheme. British Gas have recently announced a consumer incentive scheme, in partnership with local authorities, which includes council tax discounts. This scheme is carried out as part of its energy efficiency activity to deliver its targets under the Energy Efficiency Commitment.

Flood Prevention

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of expenditure by *(a)* the Environment Agency and *(b)* other operating authorities in each year since 2003–04 was spent on the maintenance of tidal river and coastal defences *(a)* in England, *(b)* in the Anglian region and *(c)* on the Suffolk coast including the Stour and Orwell. [56927]

Mr. Morley: The information is as follows:

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency's expenditure on maintenance and operation of tidal river and coastal defences as a percentage of total overall spend on all flood risk management activities nationally (maintenance, capital improvement, flood warning etc) is:

Percentage

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
England	5.7	3.4	5.6
Environment Agency Anglian region	1.9	1.9	1.9
Suffolk	0.3	0.4	0.4

[1] Based on expenditure forecasts, not actual expenditure

Local Authorities

Councils' expenditure on flood defence and coast protection, including maintenance work, is included in annual returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister who in turn support such expenditure. Councils' flood defence expenditure is not differentiated between coastal and inland waters but is likely to be predominantly spent on inland waters. The following table therefore relates to local authorities' "own spend" data on coast protection i.e. works against erosion or encroachment by the sea as compared with the total of this "own spend" plus any expenditure notified to DEFRA by the councils in regular returns of spend on DEFRA grant-aided coastal capital improvement projects.

Percentage

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
National	20	19	16
Environment Agency Anglian Region[2]	53	64	35
Suffolk[3]	33	64	35

[1] Based on expenditure forecasts, not actual expenditure

[2] Coastal councils between North Lincolnshire and Thurrock

[3] Suffolk Coastal, Waveney and Tendring district councils

Fly-tipping

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents of fly-tipping *(a)* were reported and *(b)* led to a prosecution in Swindon in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [61005]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has worked with the Environment Agency to establish a national database on fly-tipping (Flycapture) which has been operational since April 2004. No national data were previously available on illegal waste disposal or fly-tipping. Flycapture collects data at local authority level only.

It is important to note that the data are probably an underestimate and will increase as authorities get better at collecting and reporting the data.

Swindon borough council reported 2,604 incidents of fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005 (average of 217 per month) and 1,427 between April 2005 and January 2006 (average 143 per month). During the same time periods the Environment Agency investigated three and seven incidents respectively.

Prosecution data is available only from April 2005 to January 2006. During this period no prosecutions were reported by Swindon borough council, and the Environment Agency took two prosecutions (one fine of £150 and one lost case).

Marine Bill

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects her Department to be in a position to publish a draft Marine Bill. [61631]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2082W.

Pesticides

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which pesticides harmful to wildlife she plans to add to the list of those which cannot be held without lawful reason. [57155]

Mr. Morley: Clause 43(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill will make it an offence to be in possession of a pesticide containing an ingredient prescribed by order of the Secretary of State, unless possession is for purposes in accordance with relevant pesticide legislation.

Potential candidates for inclusion in the order will be identified in consultation with key stakeholders after the Bill has become law.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2015W, on pesticides and paragraph 1.2, page 4 of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides' Commentary on the report published by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) in September 2005, which bodies *(a)* the Department of Health and *(b)* the Health and Safety Executive have suggested should be asked to comment on the RCEP report, "Crop spraying and the health of residents and bystanders"; if she will place in the Library the correspondence and other records in which such requests were made; from which bodies such submissions were received; and when each was received. [58640]

Mr. Morley: The Government are seeking comments on the RCEP report from their independent scientific advisory committees; the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP), the Committee on Toxicity, the

Committee on Mutagenicity and the Committee on Carcinogenicity. The ACP's commentary has been published on its website. No formal consultation of external organisations has taken place.

Pollution Prevention and Control System

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to reduce nitrous oxide emissions from waste water; and if she will make a statement. [58544]

Mr. Morley: In 2004 3.9 thousand tonnes of nitrous oxide were emitted during wastewater treatment. This is equivalent to 0.2 per cent. of UK greenhouse gas emissions for that year. Emissions of nitrous oxide from wastewater treatment plants are regulated by the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive where the treatment is a directly associated activity of an industrial installation which is subject to that Directive.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to decrease the amount of nitrous oxide gases emitted into the atmosphere; what mechanisms are in place to monitor emissions; and if she will make a statement. [58546]

Mr. Morley: UK nitrous oxide emissions are monitored via the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory, which is published annually. Between 1990 and 2004 (the most recent year for which figures are available) the inventory shows that nitrous oxide emissions fell by about 40 per cent.

The main sources of nitrous oxide are agriculture and industrial processes including manufacture of adipic and nitric acids. Under the Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) system introduced by the Environmental Protection Act, DuPont (UK) Ltd., the operators of the only adipic acid plant in the UK, introduced an abatement unit that reduced nitrous oxide emissions from their plant by over 95 per cent. This is estimated to have reduced UK greenhouse gas emissions by 6.5 million tonnes of carbon equivalent, equal to about 3 per cent. of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions. The Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) system which is now superseding IPC will drive further reductions including at nitric acid plant.

In the agriculture sector nitrous oxide emissions fell by 17 per cent. between 1990 and 2004, and are expected to continue to fall. A range of options to reduce emissions from the sector are being considered through the Climate Change Programme Review and development of the Adaptation Policy Framework.

As part of a resource-efficient approach to farm management, we are promoting actions to optimise fertiliser use, as well as measures to improve management of manure, nutrients and soil. Additionally, activities under a range of Defra initiative, such as Catchment Sensitive Farming, can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while addressing other environmental issues. Defra is seeking to maximize the benefits of these policies in delivery of climate change objectives.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding has been made available to sewage treatment companies to explore alternatives to nitrous oxide producing machines in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [58547]

Mr. Morley: Ofwat makes provision in the price limits it sets the water and sewerage companies to make any improvements required to sewage treatment works to meet new environmental standards.

No specific provision has been made in price limits to explore alternative forms of sewage treatment that reduce the levels of nitrous oxide released to the atmosphere. It is for companies to determine how they meet their obligations in this respect.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the administrative costs of the Pollution Prevention and Control System have been in each year since 1997. [59640]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) system was set up by the Pollution Prevention and Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 and encompasses (i) regulation by the Environment Agency of industrial installations subject to the requirements of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive, and (ii) regulation by local authorities of some 23,000 generally smaller industrial installations in respect of their emissions to air. Local authorities are also responsible for the regulation of about 10 per cent. of the some 4,500 installations subject to IPPC.

These regulators recover their costs through charges made to each operator who holds a permit issued under the PPC system. The income from these charges is set out in the tables which cover the annual periods from 2000, in which year the PPC Regulations came into force. The increasing income to the Environment Agency arises because installations subject to IPPC requirements are being phased into the new system according to a timetable laid down in the PPC Regulations extending from late 2000 to early 2007. Many of those installations were already subject to integrated pollution control under the system introduced by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and which IPPC is superseding. The local authority income from charges does not vary so much from year to year because it includes income from the predecessor controls under Part I of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

While these charges account for a large part of the administrative costs of the PPC system, operators may also incur costs directly in preparing applications for permits and, on a recurring basis, responding to routine monitoring and other information requirements of their permits. No estimates of these on an annual basis are available.

Total Environment Agency income from application fees and annual charges 2000–05

April-March	*Income £ million*
2000–01	0.0
2001–02	1.5
2002–03	3.0
2003–04	12.5
2004–05	21.8

Total local authority income from application fees and annual charges 2000–05

April-March	*Income £ million*
2000–01	9.1
2001–02	8.9
2002–03	8.3
2003–04	8.0
2004–05	8.8

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which sewage treatment works are controlled under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control regime monitored by the Environment Agency. [54591]

Mr. Bradshaw: In general, the Environment Agency considers sewage treatment works not to be covered by the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive except where they constitute a directly associated activity of an industrial installation which is subject to that Directive.

However, the parts of a relatively small number, around 150, of sewage works which deal with the disposal waste in liquid form (for example, sludge brought by tanker to the sewage works) are considered by the Agency to be subject to the IPPC Directive and as such to fall to regulation for those purposes by the Agency.

Recycling

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of household waste within the areas covered by *(a)* mid-Bedfordshire district council, *(b)* South Bedfordshire district council, *(c)* Luton borough council, *(d)* Bedford borough council and *(e)* Bedfordshire county council was recycled in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [60450]

Mr. Bradshaw: Results from the municipal waste management survey giving individual local authority household recycling rates from 1998–99 to 2003–04 are published on the DEFRA web-site at: http://defraweb/environment/statistics/wastats/mwb0304/index.htm, Annex B. Due to unreliability of early survey data, individual authority recycling rates are not published prior to 1998–99. The 2004–05 Best Value Performance Indicator results for BV82a, percentage of household waste sent for recycling and BV82b, percentage of household waste sent for composting are available from the Audit Commission web-site at: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/dataprovision.asp

Jessica Morden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has conducted research into the effect on recycling rates of decreasing the *(a)* frequency of kerbside refuse collection and *(b)* volume of kerbside refuse collected. [61302]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has not conducted research into the effects of introducing alternate weekly collection (AWC) of household waste. However, the Government funded Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), published guidance for local authorities on the introduction of AWC last year.

This guide draws on the experiences of the hundred or so local authorities that have introduced AWC and uses 12 case studies covering all aspects of implementing AWC by way of illustration. The guide states

> 'Experience from other authorities suggests that recycling and participation levels increase and that kerbside waste arisings decrease as a direct result of the introduction of AWC'.

It goes on

> 'Local authorities have reported average increases in participation levels of 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. but some have been as high as 95 per cent.'

Some authorities have reported a reduction in total waste collected of between 4.5 per cent. and 13 per cent. Vale Royal borough council is quoted as follows

> "The introduction of a borough-wide kerbside recycling scheme coinciding with a move to alternate weekly collections has helped us move from a 15 per cent. recycling rate in 2003–04 to a level of 40 per cent. in 2004–05".

River Severn (Floods)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned on flood frequency in relation to the River Severn. [59055]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency (EA) is the principal operating authority for flood risk management in England and has a general supervisory duty over all matters relating to flood defence.

I understand that the EA completed four modelling studies for the River Severn between 1995 and 2004. These models simulated flood events of varying magnitudes, and showed indicative flood levels and areas of inundation for different probabilities of flood event as follows:

1995—a flood with 1 per cent. chance of occurring each year.

2000—floods with 20 per cent., 10 per cent., 4 per cent., 2 per cent. and 1 per cent. chance of occurring each year.

2004—a range of different flood events for the tidal section of the River Severn.

2004—a national generalised model for all of England and Wales, including the River Severn. This produced the flood zones that are published on the Environment Agency's website.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what definition her Department uses of a small firm. [59271]

Mr. Morley: There is no single definition of a small firm with terms such as 'small firm' and 'SME' (small and medium-sized enterprise) being used interchangeably. However, two of the most common definitions are those provided by the European Union and the Companies Act 1985. These definitions can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm and http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/audit.htm.

Waste Disposal

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the possible *(a)* environmental and *(b)* health impact of waste incinerators; and if she will make a statement. [60756]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* DEFRA has published an independent study, 'Review of the Environmental and Health Effects of Waste Management', which was peer reviewed by the Royal Society and concluded that on the evidence from studies so far the treatment of municipal solid waste—including by incineration—has at most a minor effect on human health and the environment. The report is available on DEFRA's website at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/research/health/index.htm. We have also just published a study, 'Impact of Energy from Waste and Recycling Policy on UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions', in support of the waste strategy review consultation.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health on the potential health impacts of waste incinerators. [60757]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* There have been no recent ministerial discussions about the potential health impacts of incinerators because, in 2004, an independent 'Review of the Environmental and Health Effects of Waste Management' concluded that on the evidence from studies so far the treatment of municipal solid waste—including by incineration—has at most a minor effect on human health and the environment.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received on the possible *(a)* environmental and *(b)* health impacts of waste incinerators. [60758]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* I have recently received several hundred letters from hon. Members and members of the public expressing either support for or concern about waste incineration. Most of them are the result of a campaign by Friends of the Earth and raise the concern that increased incineration will prevent higher levels of recycling, but make no reference to health impacts. These issues are addressed in the current waste strategy review consultation.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the potential contribution of waste incinerators to energy generation. [60759]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* Incineration with energy recovery is principally a waste management solution for residual, post-recycling waste, which also provides a source of renewable energy. Energy recovered from residual municipal waste currently accounts for about 0.35 per cent. of electricity generation in the UK. At current rates of conversion efficiency, this could rise to about 1.5 per cent. by 2020 on the basis of anticipated increases in this waste management route.

Waste Implementation Programme

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she expects her Department's Waste Implementation Programme to meet all its targets and objectives within the published timetable for action; and if she will make a statement. [56692]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste Implementation Programme has two overarching targets. The first is to work with stakeholders, particularly local authorities, to ensure that our national recycling and composting targets are met. The 2003–04 target of 17 per cent. was exceeded and we are confident that the 2005–06 target of 25 per cent. will be met, although figures are not yet available. WIP's second overarching target is to create the conditions in which the investment needed to meet our 2010, 2013 and 2020 landfill directive targets can take place. This remains a highly challenging objective but we are confident that good progress is being made towards achieving it.

Water

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 March 2006 to question reference 55456, on water, what sites have been considered for the proposed new water reservoir developments; and if she will make a statement. [59048]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2283W.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ascension Island

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government have had with the United States on granting *(a)* property ownership rights and *(b)* the right of abode on Ascension Island. [56871]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The administration of Ascension Island, including issues related to the right to own property and the right of abode, is a matter for the Government and Ascension Island Administration. There have not been talks in London or Washington between the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices and US Administration on these issues over the last two years. Officials visiting Ascension Island have had working level meetings with the US Base Commander on Ascension Island and the Administrator on

Ascension has a regular fortnightly meeting with the US and UK Base Commanders. These meetings cover a wide range of administrative and technical issues.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people living on Ascension Island do not have a work contract with one of the main users. [58894]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The main Users on Ascension Island are the Ascension Island Government; the UK Ministry of Defence and its contractors; the US Base and its contractors; BBC/VT Merlin; Cable and Wireless and the Composite Signals Organisation.

Leaving aside dependants of those with work contracts with one of these main Users, the authorities on Ascension Island inform us that they know of 27 adults on the Island who do not have a work contract with one of the main Users.

Departmental Wine Cellar

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on its wine cellar in each year since 1997. [60899]

Mr. Straw: The Government hospitality wine cellar is maintained on behalf of all Government Departments. Expenditure recorded for the years since 1997 on wines and spirits includes:

	£
1997–98	147,000
1998–99	103,278
1999–2000	84,794
2000–01	80,337
2001–02	92,772
2002–03	91,860
2003–04	93,503
2004–05	60,059
2005–06	95,264

Gambia

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations took place during October to December 2002 between British officials and (i) US and (ii) Gambian officials where matters relating to (A) Bisher al Rawi, (B) Wahab al Rawi and (C) Jamil el Banna were discussed; and what matters were discussed on each occasion. [60601]

Dr. Howells: The issues raised are currently the subject of legal proceedings. It would therefore be inappropriate to comment at this time.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what correspondence has been exchanged between British officials and *(a)* Gambian and *(b)* US officials where matters relating to (i) Bisher al Rawi, (ii) Wahab al Rawi and (iii) Jamil el Banna were mentioned. [60602]

Dr. Howells: The issues raised are currently the subject of legal proceedings. It would therefore be inappropriate to comment at this time.

Iran

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the possible threat posed to Israel by Iran if Iran proceeds to develop nuclear weapons. [60015]

Dr. Howells: The proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East would be deeply damaging for stability and security in the region and beyond, and for the multilateral non-proliferation system.

We have serious concerns about the nature of Iran's nuclear activities, its history of concealment and inadequate co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and its failure to take the steps requested by the IAEA Board. These have all contributed to the international community's lack of confidence that the aims of the Iranian nuclear programme are, as Iran claims, exclusively peaceful.

These concerns must also be seen in the context of Iran's ballistic missile programme, its attitude to Israel and the Middle East Peace Process, its links to Lebanese Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other groups undermining peace through violence.

It is therefore essential that Iran should meet in full the requests set out in the 4 February IAEA Board Resolution, including reinstating a full suspension of all enrichment related and reprocessing activities. We will intensify our efforts, with our partners, to that end.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his US counterparts on Iran's nuclear programme. [60968]

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his US counterparts about Iran's nuclear programme. [60954]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has regular discussions with his counterparts in the US. These discussions cover a wide range of issues, including Iran's nuclear programme. Senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials are also in frequent contact with their US opposite numbers.

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors decided in its 4 February 2006 resolution that the Security Council should now become involved on the Iran nuclear issue. We are presently discussing with the US and other members of the Security Council possible next steps by the Security Council.

Israel

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the reported statement by the government of Israel that they decided to enter the prison in Jericho only after the withdrawal of British and American monitors; and if he will make a statement. [60444]

Dr. Howells: We have not made an assessment of this statement.

Merlin Biosciences Ltd

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has met *(a)* Sir Christopher Evans and *(b)* representatives of Merlin Biosciences Limited in the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [61765]

Mr. Straw: I have not met Sir Christopher nor representatives of Merlin Biosciences in the past 12 months in my capacity as Foreign Secretary. I may have met him informally at receptions but there is no record of this.

Overseas Staff (Salary Costs)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total salary cost was for his Department's staff based overseas in the last year for which figures are available; and what the cost of locally engaged staff employed overseas by his Department was in the same period. [61486]

Mr. Straw: The pay-bill for UK-based staff in 2004–05 was £231.7 million. The costs for UK-based staff serving overseas are not separately identified, but are estimated to be £112.2 million. The total salary cost for locally employed staff employed overseas by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2004–05 was £112.4 million.

Palestinian Authority

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations were made by his Department to the Palestinian Authority about their breaches of the Ramallah Agreement prior to 8 March. [60497]

Dr. Howells: From 2002 onwards, we regularly raised our concerns to the Palestinian Authority (PA) about its failure to comply with the Ramallah Agreement. On 15 December 2005, our Deputy Head of Mission in Jerusalem informed the PA that unless security was improved, we would have to withdraw our monitors. We raised our concerns at least a further five times before delivering a UK/US letter to President Abbas on 8 March 2006.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the conditions under which Palestinian prisoners were being held in Jericho Prison by the Palestinian prison authorities. [60498]

Dr. Howells: The Palestinian Authority were responsible for the conditions under which the Palestinian prisoners were being held. The UK and US monitors' role was to monitor that the six Palestinian detainees were held in continuous seclusion.

Philippines

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress by the Government of the Philippines in introducing its Domestic Workers Bill. [60492]

Ian Pearson: We understand that the Domestic Workers Bill remains before the Philippine Congress. The Domestic Workers Bill has been in Congress for nearly nine years. The bill is currently being discussed in the Senate Committee on Labour and Employment. It passed through the House of Representatives last year.

Overseas Property Holdings

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all overseas property owned by his Department; what the primary purpose is of each property; and if he will make a statement. [61485]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office owns over 1,500 freehold and long leasehold properties overseas ranging from large embassies to small apartments and garages. Details were last published in the National Asset Register (NAR) in 2001 and can be found on the HM Treasury website at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/01C/DE/218.pdf

The NAR will be updated as part of the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Qinetiq (Contracts)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many contracts were given to Qinetiq by his Office *(a)* with and *(b)* without competitive tendering in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; and what the value of the contract was in each case. [42537]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no record of any contracts with Qinetiq in 2002–03 or 2003–04. In 2004–05, two contracts were placed with them without competitive tendering, one for £7,600 and one for £2,000.

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has been accounted for by his Department in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61362]

Mr. Straw: The figures, which are in respect of our UK based staff, for the last five financial years are as follows:

	£
2000–01	21,364,747.11
2001–02	22,564,352.15
2002–03	24,301,472.83
2003–04	26,253,831.82
2004–05	27,034,675.49

Uganda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that Land Systems OMC sold arms to Uganda; and what steps are being taken by his Department to address such arms transfers. [58813]

Ian Pearson: Land Systems OMC, is a South African based company in which BAE Systems has a 75 per cent. shareholding. We are aware of reports that Land Systems OMC has sold armoured vehicles to the Ugandan Government. Uganda is not an embargoed destination and the UK did not approve export licences for these vehicles. Overseas subsidiaries are subject to the export controls of the country in which they operate.

Armoured vehicles were used on several occasions to police the recent elections, but we have not been able to substantiate the allegations that they were used to violate human rights.

Armoured vehicles are also used by the Ugandan armed forces to escort convoys in the north of the country where there is a long-running and very violent incursion by the Lord's Resistance Army. Food convoys are essential to sustain the 1.7 million people living in internally displaced people's camps in the region.

Vietnam

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1912–13W, on Vietnam, what proportions of visa applications requiring interview in Hanoi over the last three years have been granted. [60837]

Dr. Howells: Over the last three years, the British Embassy in Hanoi received 14,779 applications, from which 6,535 applicants needed to attend an interview. Of these 1,359 were refused. The overall issue rate for applications requiring interview is 79 per cent.

DEFENCE

Surplus Military Equipment

20. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will revise the rules relating to the disposal of surplus military equipment to ensure that such equipment is not put to inappropriate end use. [60977]

Mr. Ingram: Every sale is subject to rigorous terms and conditions including, for Government-to-Government sales, the requirement to seek approval for any subsequent sale or transfer. Equipment intended for the commercial market is declassified and demilitarised as appropriate prior to sale. The rules for the disposal of surplus military equipment are kept under constant review and were there to be a strong justification, they could be adapted.

Afghanistan

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the UK deployment in Afghanistan. [60965]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave today to the hon. Member for Vale of York (Miss McIntosh).

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the UK deployment in Afghanistan. [60956]

John Reid: British troops are deploying to Afghanistan in pursuit of our existing objectives.

We are in Afghanistan under UNSCR 1623, and at the invitation of the democratically elected Government to prevent that country ever again reverting to a haven for terrorists from which terrorists attacks can be launched, by helping the Afghan people build their own democracy, their own security forces, and the country's legitimate economy.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to equip all British troops in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, with the standard personal weapon issued to the SAS. [60955]

John Reid: British armed forces use a range of different weapons depending on their operational role. Most troops deploying to Helmand will be issued with the SA80 A2. We never comment on special forces.

Army Restructuring

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on Army restructuring. [60971]

Mr. Ingram: Work is already under way on restructuring the Army. 19 Mechanised Brigade has already formed up as a Light Brigade while four Armoured Brigade will re-role as a Mechanised Brigade by the end of the year. The majority of changes to the infantry will be implemented by Spring 2007 whilst the key foundations on which the future Army structure is to be built will be in place by the end of 2008.

Cadet Corps (Rifles)

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the *(a)* DP and *(b)* GP rifles used by (i) army cadets, (ii) sea cadets and (iii) air cadets are in good working condition. [60099]

Mr. Ingram: Information about the condition of individual weapons held by cadet units is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many rifles have been cannibalised for spare parts in order to keep other rifles used by cadets in working order since January 2004. [60243]

Mr. Ingram: Only rifles classified as Beyond Repair are cannibalised for spare parts. Since January 2004 a total of 300 Cadet rifles have been so categorised. The process of cannibalisation is managed at unit level and information on the numbers of rifles involved is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Chinook

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Written Statement of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 113W, on Chinook support, whether the Defence Aviation Repair Agency sub-contract with Boeing for through-life customer support of the Chinook helicopter fleet will be extended to cover contracts with other countries' Chinook fleets. [61295]

Mr. Ingram: No. The Through-Life Customer Support contract covers through-life maintenance, repair and overhaul for only the UK RAF's Chinook fleet.

Executed Soldiers (Posthumous Pardons)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on the granting of posthumous pardons to soldiers of the First World War who were executed following conviction for cowardice, desertion, sleeping at posts, disobedience, throwing away arms and hitting a superior officer; and if he will make a statement. [60978]

Mr. Touhig: We continue to receive many representations on the subject of posthumous pardons for the soldiers who were executed during the First World War. This subject provokes powerful emotions, and there are strong and principled views on both sides of the question.

Interview Transcript

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the transcript or contemporaneous note taken of the interview given by officials of his Department reported on 20 March in the Afghan newspapers Outlook and Siyasat. [60937]

Mr. Ingram: Officials have been unable to locate copies of the articles referred to by the hon. Member. I will write to the hon. Member once they have done so and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

Iraq

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Iraq. [61044]

John Reid: While there has been an increase in sectarian violence, particularly in and around Baghdad following the bombing of the Golden Mosque, the majority of attacks remain confined to four out of Iraq's 18 provinces.

The UK's area of operation in MND(SE) remains relatively calm.

QinetiQ

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's special share in QinetiQ. [44153]

John Reid: I can confirm that in recent highly successful QinetiQ initial public offering, in addition to receiving proceeds of £347 million for the taxpayer and maintaining access to cutting-edge technology for our armed forces, the Government have retained a special share in QinetiQ to protect the defence or security interests of the UK.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's *(a)* long-term partnering agreement, *(b)* compliance regime agreement and *(c)* special shareholder agreement with QinetiQ. [47267]

John Reid: The Ministry of Defence's long-term partnering agreement, compliance regime agreement and special shareholder agreement with QinetiQ are commercially confidential agreements and I am therefore unable to place copies in the Library. However, a detailed summary of the key aspects of these agreements appeared on pages 287–292, 54 and 244–247 respectively of the QinetiQ prospectus, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House on 26 January 2006.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list strategic assets which QinetiQ must retain and maintain under the principal agreement with his Department. [47270]

John Reid: The list of strategic assets in the principal agreement is updated from time to time to reflect the requirements of MOD customers. The current list is shown in the following table. In addition, assets required for MOD programmes may be subject to further requirements covering maintenance and disposal and these would form part of the various individual contracts with customers.

List of strategic assets identified in the QinetiQ restated principal agreement (correct at 30 January 2006)

Facility/capability	*Location*
Air-surface, air-air and surface-air weapons evaluation	Aberporth
Surface-surface weapons evaluation	Aberporth
Target development and provision	Aberporth
Controlled airspace for aircraft evaluation and weapons clearance	Aberporth
Hyperbaric facility	Alverstoke
Magnetic signature ranging	Barons Point
Fast jet flying facility	Boscombe Down
Aircraft parking	Boscombe Down
Rotary wing flying facility	Boscombe Down
ME flying facility	Boscombe Down
Jaguar 833	Boscombe Down
Applied performance req	Boscombe Down
Boscombe Down Chester estates	Boscombe Down
Military aircraft release	Boscombe Down
Airfield Services	Boscombe Down
Environmental test chamber	Boscombe Down

List of strategic assets identified in the QinetiQ restated principal agreement (correct at 30 January 2006)

Facility/capability	*Location*
Avionics rigs	Boscombe Down
Radio frequency (REG)	Boscombe Down
Radio navigation trials	Boscombe Down
Data systems	Boscombe Down
Alpha Jets	Boscombe Down
Andovers	Boscombe Down
Basset	Boscombe Down
BAC111	Boscombe Down
Chieftan	Boscombe Down
Gazelles	Boscombe Down
Harvard	Boscombe Down
Hawks	Boscombe Down
Lynx	Boscombe Down
Sea Kings	Boscombe Down
TIARA	Boscombe Down
Tucano	Boscombe Down
VAAC Harrier	Boscombe Down
Bays (logistics for aircraft)	Boscombe Down
Empire test pilot school	Boscombe Down
Rolling platform	Boscombe Down
Magnetic signature ranging	Burnt island
Roll and stray field ranging	Burnt island
Mine hunting and sonar systems evaluation	BUTEC
Tracking and evaluation of torpedoes and sonar systems	BUTEC
Wet Gap bridge crossing	Christchurch,
Gun range and accuracy trials	Eskmeals
Proof of ordnance	Eskmeals
Munitions and armour	Eskmeals
Weapon and armour development trials	Eskmeals
Hypobaric facility	Farnborough
Helicopter rotor test facility	Farnborough
Hyposonic tunnels	Farnborough
Misc gun ranges	Fort Halstead,
Cavitation tunnel	Haslar
Haslar wave maker	Haslar
Towing tank	Haslar
Ocean basin	Haslar,
Quiet water tunnel	Haslar,
Hosting of annual practice camps	Hebrides
Air-surface, surface-air weapons systems	Hebrides
Long range air-air systems	Hebrides
Over the horizon weapons evaluation	Hebrides
Target provision	Hebrides
Vehicle test track	Hum
Electro magnetic launcher	Kirkcudbright
CHARM operational ammunitions proof	Kirkcudbright
Gunnery evaluation	Larkhill
Surface-surface, short range surface-air weapons evaluation	Larkhill
Bombing and rocket trials	Larkhill
Heavy store and ultra low drops	Larkhill
UAV trials	Larkhill
Laser system trials	Larkhill
Acoustic signature ranging	Loch Goil/Loch Fyne
Hydrophone calibration	Loch Goil/Loch Fyne
Maytime (floating facility)	Loch Goil/Loch Fyne
Dynamic and static warheads testing	Pendine
Long and short test tracks	Pendine
Small arms/cannon test/proof capability	Pendine
Short impact test track	Pendine
Magnetic signature ranging	Plymouth
Acoustic signature ranging	Portland
Open sea magnetic signature ranging	Portland
Land magnetic ranging and compass calibration	Portland
Electronic warfare calibration	Portland
Magnetic signature ranging	Portsmouth
Acoustic signature ranging	Rona
Magnetic signature ranging	Rosneath
Underwater explosives testing	Rosyth
Pressure testing	Rosyth
Submarine pressure chamber	Rosyth
Small fatigue chamber	Rosyth
Environmental testing of explosives and weapons	Shoeburyness
Safety testing of hazardous stores	Shoeburyness

List of strategic assets identified in the QinetiQ restated principal agreement (correct at 30 January 2006)

Facility/capability	*Location*
Large NEQ static warhead and fragmentation testing	Shoeburyness
Overwater recovery and proximity fuze testing	Shoeburyness
3.5km direct fire range	Shoeburyness
Munitions, propellant and weapons systems testing	Shoeburyness
Ordnance disposal facilities/demilitarisation	Shoeburyness
Electronic warfare calibration	Skipness
Underwater explosives testing project management	Weston Super Mare, Winfrith
Acoustic ranges (includes magnetic tape archive)	Winfrith

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Correspondence

Mr. Bone: To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward guidelines for Ministers on responding to written requests from hon. Members for meetings and information. [61610]

Mr. Hoon: Existing guidance emphasises that it is essential that MPs receive carefully considered and prompt responses to correspondence. Ministers will give proper consideration to any requests for a meeting with hon. Members and for information. It must however be a matter for judgment as to whether a meeting would be possible in the particular circumstances of each case and this is not something on which precise guidance can be given.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum and Immigration Tribunal

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she last met Sir Henry Hodge, President of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal; and if she will make a statement. [61009]

Bridget Prentice: I last met with Mr. Justice Hodge on 1 February of this year to discuss the role of non-legal members in the Tribunal.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the backlog is of cases at the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal. [61010]

Bridget Prentice: There is currently no administrative backlog of appeals at the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT). Between April 2005 and October 2005, an administrative backlog of entry clearance and family visitor appeals built up with the AIT, totalling approximately 39,000 cases. Those cases experienced a delay in initial processing (acknowledgment and issue of papers to the respondent requesting the appeal bundle) of up to 16 weeks. The administrative backlog was cleared by the end of December 2005.

The once backlogged appeals now form part of the Tribunal's current work in progress—as at February 2006 around 82,000 immigration judge appeals and 6,000 other cases for review or reconsideration. As a result of work load volumes, and the clearance of backlogged cases, the AIT is currently listing entry clearance and family visit appeals at 16 weeks from receipt of the appeal bundle. This represents a departure of between eight and 12 weeks from steady-state time scales.

Cemeteries

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured by unsafe memorials in cemeteries in each of the last 20 years; and if she will make a statement. [60914]

Ms Harman: As I said in the reply I gave on 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 182W, an accurate record has not been kept of the total number of fatalities and injuries arising from unsafe memorials in cemeteries in recent years; but I understand that there have been 21 serious accidents to members of the public, including three fatalities, in the five years prior to June 2004.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the future provision of advice lines available to the Citizens Advice Bureau. [59958]

Ms Harman: The Citizens Advice service had 475 member bureaux in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2004–05. All bureaux are independent registered charities. People providing advice in individual bureaux may choose to use any advice lines available to organisations, including those supported by government funding.

Community Legal Service Direct

Julie Morgan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs who are the providers of Community Legal Service Direct. [59738]

Ms Harman: Community Legal Service Direct consists of a national helpline, 0845 345 4345, a website, www.clsdirect.org.uk and a series of free printed legal information leaflets.

The 15 specialist advice providers currently contracted to provide legal advice for the Community Legal Service Direct National Telephone Service are set out in the list that follows.

In addition, Dataforce are contracted to provide the directory line telephone service, a directory of legal advisors across England and Wales.

EC Group are contracted to print and distribute the range of Community Legal Service Direct legal information leaflets. EC Group are also contracted to provide the leaflet line, a telephone leaflet-ordering service.

Community Legal Service Direct—Specialist advice providers

Ammanford and District Citizens Advice Bureau;

Capita Insurance Services Ltd.;

Children's Legal Centre;

Community Law Partnership;

Cornwall County Council Trading Standards;

DAWN (Advice) Ltd.;

Derbyshire Housing Aid;

DIAL Doncaster;

French and Co.;

Maxwell Gillott;

Norwich and District Citizens Advice Bureau;

Sheffield Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Support Unit;

Shelter the National Campaign for Homeless People Ltd.;

Stevenage Citizens Advice Bureau; and

Stoke-on-Trent and District Citizens Advice Bureau

Constituency Populations

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to equalise the populations of constituencies. [61677]

Bridget Prentice: The independent Parliamentary Boundary Commissions review parliamentary boundaries every 8 to12 years. Although the electoral quota is important, it is necessary to take other factors into account, such as geographical and community issues. The Parliamentary Boundary Commissions consider all these factors when conducting their review.

Court Adjournments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken to mitigate the cost effects on the criminal justice system of *(a)* security companies producing prisoners late at court and *(b)* courts over-listing cases resulting in unnecessary adjournments. [61316]

Ms Harman: The CJS is seeking further to improve prisoner delivery to court and mitigate the cost of late arrivals. This will be achieved through the increased procurement of prison video link equipment, thus reducing the volume of prisoners attending court in person, and the improving prisoner availability project (IPAP).

The number of ineffective trials due to over-listing in the Crown court and the magistrates' court since 2002–03 has declined as a result of action taken by the courts in liaison with CJS partners. Performance is monitored.

Crown Courts

Robert Key: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what percentage of convictions in Crown courts were successfully appealed in each calendar year between 2000 and 2005. [53480]

Ms Harman: The following table shows the number and percentage of appellants per calendar year whose appeal against their Crown court conviction was allowed on appeal.

Year and result of conviction appeals allowed[1]

	Number	Percentage
2000	150	31
2001	135	30
2002	166	34
2003	178	33
2004	240	38
2005	228	37

[1] Includes appeals which were allowed in whole or in part.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1576–8W, on departmental telephone numbers, what service each *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone number maintained by the Department for Constitutional Affairs provides; and what revenue was obtained from (i) 0845 and (ii) 0870 numbers maintained by her Department in the last period for which figures are available. [60442]

Bridget Prentice: For 2004–05, the revenue obtained from (i) 0845 telephone numbers was £236.81 and (ii) 0870 numbers was £174,945.21.

My Department does not hold central records of the services provided by each of the numbers. That information could now be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Inquiries Act

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the inquiries *(a)* converted to and *(b)* initiated under the Inquiries Act 2005 since its commencement; what the completion date or estimated completion date is of each; and what the budget or final cost of each inquiry is, broken down by the categories proposed in Article 12 (2)(b) of the draft Inquiry Procedure (UK Inquiries) Rules. [61332]

Ms Harman: On 23 November 2005 the Billy Wright inquiry was converted by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to an inquiry to be held under the Inquiries Act 2005. Information on the budget and timetable for this inquiry is still being formulated and is not currently available.

Acting in accordance with its powers under section 1 of the Inquiries Act 2005, a motion was passed on 7 December 2005 in the plenary session of the National Assembly for Wales to cause an inquiry into the E.coli outbreak in South Wales in September 2005.

On 16 November 2004 the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend the Member for Torfaen (Mr. Murphy), announced the terms of reference for the inquiry into the death of Robert Hamill following an incident in Portadown, County Armagh on 27 April 1997. The inquiry is being held under section 44 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

The web-site for the Hamill Inquiry sets out that:

> "The Chairman of the Robert Hamill inquiry has come to the view that the limitations on the inquiry's powers of compulsion contained in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 Act, coupled with the clear indications that important witnesses are unwilling

to give evidence, point powerfully to a decision to convert the inquiry to one that should be constituted under the Inquiries Act 2005."

To this end, the Chairman has written to the Permanent Secretary, Jonathan Phillips, at the Northern Ireland Office.

At this time, no other inquiries have yet been established under the Inquiries Act.

The draft inquiry procedure (UK inquiries) rules are currently out to public consultation, which began on 1 March and will end on 23 May 2006.

Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill

Alan Simpson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment her Department made of the constitutional implications of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill, with particular reference to the powers of each House. [59849]

Ms Harman: My Department does not make formal assessments of the constitutional implications of individual pieces of legislation.

Notaries

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which EU states allow notaries public from England and Wales to practise within their legal system. [60280]

Bridget Prentice: No EU member state allows notaries public from England and Wales to practise within their legal system.

All notarial appointments are limited to the jurisdiction in which the notary qualified.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs to what extent the UK allows notaries public from other EU member states to work in the UK as notaries public. [60282]

Bridget Prentice: Notaries from EU member states cannot work in the UK unless they re-qualify to become an English or Welsh notary.

If an EU notary wishes to do this, they must apply to the Master of the Faculty Office, which regulates notaries in England and Wales, for recognition and for admission as a general notary to practise anywhere in England and Wales.

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she plans to submit the Government's legislation on legal reform for pre-legislative scrutiny in the Constitutional Affairs Select Committee. [60654]

Bridget Prentice: It has been agreed that the Government's draft legislation on Legal Services Reform will be scrutinised by a Joint Committee.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59273]

Ms Harman: There is no single definition of a small firm with terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (small and medium-sized enterprise) being used interchangeably.

When completing the Small Business Service Annual Survey for HM Treasury, my Department uses the Treasury definition of an organisation with 249 or less full-time employees (or equivalent).

My officials follow the central guidance on regulatory impact assessments, including its suggestion that any business with less than 250 employees should be considered small.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Annesley Mansion/Promenade (Newcastle)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Department is responsible for the *(a)* Annesley Mansion project and *(b)* promenade project in Newcastle, County Down. [60456]

Angela E. Smith: Central Government are not responsible for either of these projects. District councils have powers under the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 to provide recreational facilities and may promote tourism under the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

Biofuels

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Government Department in Northern Ireland has responsibility for biofuels. [56393]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has responsibility for energy policy and strategy and for producing an overarching energy framework for Northern Ireland, including biofuels, which contribute to the achievement of that energy policy. Other Departments also contribute to the development, regulation and delivery of that policy within the terms of specific departmental responsibilities.

Bullying

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils were *(a)* suspended and *(b)* expelled for bullying in schools in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [59818]

Angela E. Smith: The Department does not hold information on the reasons for suspension and expulsion for each of the last five years.

From the 2002–03 school year, statistics on the reasons for suspension have been gathered annually from each education and library board and relate to the number of individual suspensions not to the number of pupils suspended. The table details the number of suspensions for bullying in school for the 2002–03 to 2004–05 school years:

Suspensions as a result of bullying

School year	*Number of incidences*
2002–03	289
2003–04	341
2004–05	322

The reasons for expulsion were first collected in 2003–04. The following table details the number of pupils expelled for bullying in school for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 school years.

Expulsions as a result of bullying

School year	*Number of incidences*
2003–04	0
2004–05	2

Causeway IT

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress on the Causeway IT programme. [60175]

Mr. Hanson: The Causeway Programme is a joint enterprise by the six criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland that aims to improve their performance by sharing information electronically. The programme is being implemented in phases.

Phase 1, the Criminal Justice Viewer, was implemented on time and within budget in March 2004.

Phase 2, Electronic Case Preparation—which enables the electronic transfer of information between the police, prosecution and forensic services—went live on 13 June 2005. To date some 40,000 PSNI investigation cases have been placed on the Causeway system with approximately 13,000 of these being shared with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). There have been over 11,000 shares of forensic test requests and reports between forensic scientists, the police and prosecution lawyers. Over the course of the year Causeway is expected to have removed from circulation some 6 million pieces of paper.

Examples of other tangible benefits already delivered include:

A reduction in the average time taken by police officers in Omagh to prepare a case from 70 to 29 days.

The release of 33 police officers from administrative duties back to the beat.

A reduction in the time taken by probation officers to check a criminal record from 2–3 weeks to a few seconds.

The programme is currently working on phase 3, in which the Northern Ireland Court Service and the Prison Service will join the system. Recently the Compensation Agency, Youth Justice Agency and the Police Ombudsman's Office have been provided with access to on-line criminal records. The programme is also examining the feasibility of linking into the Police National Computer. In addition to winning a national award for promoting joined up government, Causeway was recently cited by HM Treasury as an example of best practice in risk management.

Charter Mark

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many charter marks were awarded to public sector *(a)* offices and *(b)* departments in Northern Ireland in 2005. [61425]

Angela E. Smith: The information is not available in the format requested. However, I can confirm that 43 Charter Marks were achieved by 17 public sector organisations in Northern Ireland in 2005. In addition, four Charter Marks were achieved by voluntary sector organisations which deliver public services. A list of all Northern Ireland organisations which achieved Charter Mark in 2005 is as follows:

Organisation	*Office*
St. Mary's College, Creggan	
Compensation Agency	
North and West Belfast Trust	Assisted Living Scheme
	Muckamore Abbey
Mid Ulster Hospital	Children's Unit
	Hotel Services Department
Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust	Direct Access Haematuria Service
	Paediatric Diabetes Service
Down District Council	Downpatrick and Newcastle Tourist Information Centres
	Building Control
General Register Office	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
North Eastern Education and Library Board	Library Service
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Antrim District Office
	Collon Terrace District Office, Londonderry
	Armagh District Office
	Belfast 6 District Office
	Carrickfergus District Office
	Cookstown District Office
	Downpatrick District Office
	Lurgan Brownlow District Office
	Omagh District Office
	Ballyclare Grants Office
	Ballymoney District Office
	Banbridge District Office
	Bangor District Office
	Belfast South and East Grants Office
	Limavady District Office
	Magherafelt District Office

Organisation	*Office*
	Newtownabbey District 2 Office
	Newtownards District Office
	Omagh Grants Office
	Waterside District Office
Ards Borough Council	Ards Crafts, Ards and Portaferry Tourist Information Centres
Cookstown Tourist Information Centre	
Whiteabbey Hospital	Day Rehabilitation Unit
Ulidia Housing Association Ltd.[1]	
Action Mental Health[1]	New Horizons Fermanagh
Causeway Health and Social Services Trust	Domestic Services Department
Down Lisburn Health and Social Services Trust (Corporate Charter Mark)	
Department of Education	Education and Training Inspectorate
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health[1]	
Northern Ireland Court Service	Antrim Court Office
	Armagh Court Office
	Ballymena Court Office
	Banbridge Court Office
	Court Funds Office
	Dungannon Court Office
	Enniskillen Court Office
	Limavady Court Office
	Lisburn Court Office
	Magherafelt Court Office
	Newry Court Office
	Strabane Court Office
Royal Victoria Hospital	Regional Endocrinology and Diabetes Centre
Springfield Charitable Association[1]	

[1] Voluntary Sector Organisations

Civil Service

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of people were recruited in Northern Ireland into the *(a)* senior civil service and *(b)* administrative officer, temporary administrative officer, administrative assistant and temporary administrative assistant grades over the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by perceived religious affiliation expressed in (i) numerical and (ii) percentage terms. [59363]

Angela E. Smith: Recruitment figures for appointments to the Northern Ireland civil service in the categories and in the years specified are contained in the tables. These figures represent the appointments made by both the Department of Finance and Personnel's Recruitment Service and by Departments individually.

Senior civil service

	Community background (numbers)			*Community background (percentage)*		
	P	*RC*	*ND*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*
2000–01	9	6	2	52.94	35.29	11.77
2001–02	12	3	0	80	20	0
2002–03	11	4	1	68.75	25	6.25
2003–04	12	14	1	44.44	51.85	3.71
2004–05	14	7	0	66.67	33.33	0
Total	58	34	4	62.56	33.09	4.35

Permanent—administrative officer

	Community background (numbers)			*Community background (percentage)*		
	P	*RC*	*ND*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*
2000–01	1,047	1.312	24	43.94	55.05	1.01
2001–02	392	419	6	47.98	51.29	0.73
2002–03	0	0	0	0	0	0
2003–04	727	913	12	44.01	55.26	0.73
2004–05	294	282	1	50.95	48.88	0.17
Total	2,460	2,926	43	46.72	52.62	0.66

Permanent—administrative assistant

	Community background (numbers)			*Community background (percentage)*		
	P	*RC*	*ND*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*
2000–01	310	452	12	40.05	58.40	1.55
2001–02	601	752	24	43.65	54.61	1.74
2002–03	243	312	4	43.47	55.81	0.72
2003–04	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004–05	180	166	2	51.73	47.70	0.57
Total	1,334	1,682	42	44.72	54.13	1.15

Temporary—administrative officer

	Community background (numbers)			*Community background (percentage)*		
	P	*RC*	*ND*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*
2000–01	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001–02	0	0	0	0	0	0
2002–03	0	0	2	0	0	100
2003–04	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004–05	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	2	0	0	100

Temporary—administrative assistant

	Community background (numbers)			*Community background (percentage)*		
	P	*RC*	*ND*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*
2000–01	243	392	234	27.96	45.11	26.93
2001–02	514	726	43	40.06	56.59	3.35
2002–03	542	787	28	39.94	58	2.06
2003–04	279	469	18	36.42	61.23	2.35
2004–05	323	429	12	42.28	56.15	1.57
Total	1,901	2,803	335	37.33	55.42	7.25

The following figures, for which there is no perceived religious breakdown readily available, relate to appointments made by the Department of the Environment, within the categories indicated, in the 2004–05 year. All other appointment details for the Department of the Environment have been included in the summary figures above.

		Community background (numbers)			*Community background (percentage)*		
Competition	*Total*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*	*P*	*RC*	*ND*
Temporary administrative assistant	46						
Temporary administrative officer	48						
Total	96	47	39	8	50	41	9

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil servants in Northern Ireland receive *(a)* the minimum wage and *(b)* up to £1 per hour more than the minimum wage. [61389]

Angela E. Smith: All members of the Northern Ireland civil service are paid above the national minimum wage. 4,785 Northern Ireland civil servants receive a wage up to £1 more than the national minimum wage of £5.05 per hour.

Coastal Protection Schemes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what projects were undertaken by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in relation to coastal protection schemes related to tourism or harbours in each of the last five years. [60457]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) is responsible for coastal protection works associated with schemes relating to tourism in Northern Ireland. DETI has not carried out any such works in the last five years.

The improvement, maintenance or management of a harbour, which might include coastal protection measures, is the responsibility of designated harbour authorities.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which department is responsible for coastal protection schemes *(a)* where there is a (i) road and (ii) promenade interest and *(b)* related to (A) tourism and (B) harbours. [60458]

Angela E. Smith: Coastal protection schemes may include measures to combat erosion and also construction and maintenance of defences against tidal flooding.

1. The Departments responsible for coastal protection schemes dealing with erosion threatening the specified interests are:

(a)(i) Roads—Department for Regional Development (for roads adopted into the public road network).

(ii) Promenades—Department for Regional Development (for promenades adopted into the public road network).

(b)(A) Tourism—Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

(B) Harbours—Department for Regional Development, Donaghadee harbour only.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development—Fisheries Harbours only.

2. DARD, Rivers Agency is responsible for maintenance of designated sea defences providing protection against tidal flooding.

Cross-border Bodies

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the membership of each cross-border body set up under the Belfast Agreement. [57953]

Angela E. Smith: Four of the North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Limited have Boards.

The names of all the Board members were provided in a Northern Ireland Office press release of 19 December 2005, covering the extension of their term of office. A copy of this press release has been placed in the Libraries of the House and can also be found at http://www.nio.gov.uk/media-detail.htm?newsID=12661.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the political affiliation is of members of each cross-border body set up under the Belfast Agreement. [58057]

Angela E. Smith: We do not know the political affiliations of the members of the boards of cross-border bodies.

Deprivation Taskforce

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to be in a position to announce the outcome of the taskforce he established to bring forward proposals to deal with deprivation and educational under-achievement in Unionist areas. [61629]

Mr. Hanson: The Taskforce to Address the Needs of Protestant Working Class Areas reported to me as Minister with responsibility for social development, in late 2005. Since that time, I have personally undertaken extensive consultation with civil and elected representatives of the Protestant community in order to test the conclusions of the taskforce in the community.

I am currently working closely with the senior civil service officials to finalise a positive agenda for action on tackling disadvantage, with a particular emphasis on Protestant working class communities. A Government announcement on this issue will take place in early April. A delivery team, lead by Nigel Hamilton, head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, has been appointed to drive forward this important work.

Driving Offences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Police Service for Northern Ireland plans to provide a single form under the conditional fixed penalty to establish who was driving at the time of the offence as well as offering the offending driver the option of a fixed penalty or to proceed to court. [59364]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently two forms sent out under the Conditional Fixed Penalty Policy—the 'Notice of Intention to prosecute', which asks the owner to confirm who was driving the vehicle, and the 'Conditional Offer'. The amalgamation of the two forms was recommended in a recent internal review of the Fixed Penalty Processing Centre. PSNI is currently working on implementing this with the Northern Ireland Court Service.

Economic Inactivity

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the economic inactivity rates were for each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last 20 years. [60917]

Angela E. Smith: The labour force survey can be used to provide economic inactivity rates by Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency area, however, these estimates are available on a consistent basis only from 1995 onwards (see following table).

Working age economic inactivity rates[1] by parliamentary constituency area, spring 1995 to spring 2005

Percentage

Parliamentary constituency area	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Belfast, East	25	21	25	33	35	25	21	22	24	28	22
Belfast, North	44	40	36	29	30	32	32	32	33	34	40
Belfast, South	34	25	27	25	31	34	24	23	26	40	28
Belfast, West	44	49	45	42	43	51	46	47	45	46	38
East Antrim	16	24	26	26	19	25	24	20	19	17	17
East Londonderry	31	32	31	25	26	37	32	35	19	33	30
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	33	27	26	29	30	28	28	29	29	27	34
Foyle	33	30	40	35	34	35	37	38	42	38	36
Lagan Valley	24	23	22	25	21	27	20	27	26	22	18
Mid-Ulster	30	37	28	31	27	31	34	30	28	31	32
Newry and Armagh	31	34	30	26	31	32	30	30	33	33	32
North Antrim	33	28	20	28	27	21	23	23	23	30	23
North Down	20	28	19	21	25	22	22	26	21	21	26
South Antrim	19	17	27	21	22	22	18	17	16	27	25
South Down	27	24	23	28	24	29	28	27	22	29	27
Strangford	21	18	20	20	24	34	28	29	24	27	26
Upper Bann	25	29	26	26	29	26	27	31	31	27	27
West Tyrone	40	36	33	35	36	36	42	37	23	32	33
Northern Ireland	29	29	28	28	28	30	29	29	27	30	29

[1] The working age economic inactivity rate is equal to the number of people who are neither in employment nor unemployed as a percentage of the total population of working age. Working age is taken as ages 16 to 59 for females and 16 to 64 for males.

Note:

Estimates for parliamentary constituency areas are based on relatively small sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution and, in particular, changes from year-to-year should not be used in isolation from the figures for a run of years.

Source:

Labour Force Survey, spring (March–May) quarters of each year.

Education Expenditure

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the increased expenditure on education announced in the Budget Statement on 22 March will be allocated to each education and library board in Northern Ireland. [61751]

Angela E. Smith: The Budget Statement will result in an additional £26 million for Northern Ireland over the next two years. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced on 22 March that the bulk of this will be allocated to the children and young people fund, increasing the value of the fund from of £75 million to more than £100 million over the next two years. The detailed distribution of this increase has not yet been finalised; however, the Secretary of state intends to allocate the majority of this additional spending direct to head teachers.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the *(a)* net cost of installation and *(b)* expected savings from solar panels for the average homeowner in Northern Ireland in 2006. [59821]

Angela E. Smith: The current net cost of a fully installed domestic solar panel system depends on the type of system used but, on average, is approximately £3,000, and could save the householder between £30 and

£150 per year based on 2006 fuel costs. The recently announced £59 million Environment and Renewable Energy Fund represents a significant investment in renewable energy technologies. The Fund proposes a household programme which will offer grant support towards the cost of solar panel systems.

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to implement in Northern Ireland those articles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which have been ratified by the Government. [60413]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested was provided by the Government to the Council of Europe in its Second Implementation Report of June 2005. A copy of the NI contribution to the report has been placed in the Library of the House.

Fishing Licences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change was in the number of fishing licences awarded for use in the Foyle catchment area between 1995 and 2005. [61616]

Angela E. Smith: The changes in the number of fishing licences awarded for use in the Foyle catchment area between 1995 and 2005 are as follows:

	Rod	*Commercial*	*Total*
1995	4,753	168	4,921
1996	+1,385	-6	+1,379
1997	+1,352	-11	+1,341
1998	+2,328	-9	+2,319
1999	+1,919	-18	+1,901
2000	+1,467	-19	+1,488
2001	+1,504	-23	+1,481
2002	+2,577	-22	+2,555
2003	+3,765	-17	+3,748
2004	+4,974	-28	+4,946
2005	+6,019	-18	+6,001

Notes:

1. 1995 is used as the baseline with the change indicated as a comparison with this figure.

2. Rod licences issued b the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (since its creation in December 1999) entitle the holder to fish in both the Foyle and Carlingford areas. Before the creation of the FCILC, licences were issued by its predecessor, the Foyle Fisheries Commission, and related to the Foyle area only.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been convicted of fishing without a valid licence in the Foyle catchment area in the last three years. [61617]

Angela E. Smith: The number of people convicted of fishing without a valid licence in the Foyle catchment area in the last three years are as follows.

	Number of convictions
2003	7
2004	0
2005	3

Fly-posting

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many people have been prosecuted in Northern Ireland for illegal fly-posting in the last five years; [59609]

(2) how many people have been prosecuted in Northern Ireland over the last five years for illegal fly-posting. [59878]

Angela E. Smith: None. The Department of the Environment is currently considering the range of measures in the recent Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, which among other things strengthens the legislation for dealing with fly-posting in England and Wales, with a view to making recommendations on how they might be brought forward in the Northern Ireland context.

Harassment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prosecutions involving harassment have *(a)* been initiated and *(b)* been successful in each of the past five years; how many of these have involved members of ethnic minorities; and what the sentence was in each case. [61497]

Mr. Hanson: Table 1 provides the number of prosecutions and subsequent convictions for harassment, while table 2 includes the disposals given to those convicted.

At present, Northern Ireland court proceedings and sentencing data sources do not include background information in relation to the commission of an offence, therefore, it is possible to determine if these cases involved members of ethnic minorities.

The figures cover the calendar years 1999 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 are not yet available. Data are collated on a principal offence rule, thus only the most serious offence for which an offender is prosecuted is recorded in the statistics.

Table 1: Number prosecuted and convicted for harassment 1999–2003

	Number prosecuted	*Number convicted*
1999	36	29
2000	23	17
2001	31	20
2002	27	19
2003	31	17

Table 2: Sentences given to those convicted of harassment 1999–2003

	Immediate custody	Suspended custody	Supervision in the community	Fine	Conditional discharge	Other	Total
1999	4	3	5	7	7	3	29
2000	1	3	4	3	3	3	17
2001	1	5	3	5	5	1	20
2002	1	8	2	4	1	3	19
2003	3	5	3	3	3	0	17

Illegal Dumping Unit

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what budget has been allocated to the Department of Environment's illegal dumping unit. [60419]

Angela E. Smith: The remit of the enforcement team includes illegal dumping, serious breaches of licensing conditions, unauthorised waste movement and Producer Responsibility obligations. The overall budget for these activities is £800,000 for 2006–07.

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of illegal dumping were investigated by the Department of Environment in each of the last three years. [60421]

Angela E. Smith: The Department investigated 1259 cases of illegal dumping in 2004 and 1326 in 2005. To date in 2006, 302 investigations have been carried out.

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures his Department is taking to reduce the occurrence of illegal dumping in Northern Ireland. [60423]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment has a dedicated enforcement team which investigates incidents of illegal dumping and prepares cases, where appropriate, for the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). PPS is sending more cases to the Crown court for trial, which both recognises the severity of the offence, and imposes increasingly heavy fines, such as the £50,000 fine imposed on a Cookstown man in September 2005.

The introduction of the "flycapture" database, on which all district councils record all incidents of fly-tipping, will strengthen the pool of shared intelligence allowing joint action to tackle serious incidents and serious offenders.

The Department continues to work closely and successfully with other enforcement agencies and following public consultation will seek to introduce strengthened legislative powers, by the end of 2006, to restrain further this criminal activity.

Industrial De-rating

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will assess the impact on businesses in Northern Ireland of the end of industrial de-rating. [60417]

Angela E. Smith: The phasing out of industrial de-rating, which was fully consulted on as part of the overall Review of Rating Policy, came into operation on 1 April 2005 when businesses entitled to industrial de-rating became liable for rates at 15 per cent. of their full rate assessment. It will be 1 April 2011 before businesses will have to pay full rates. By that stage they will have had some eight years since the first announcement was made to remove industrial de-rating to prepare for full rate liability.

Given that the policy has been in operation for only one year it is not practical to forecast what the final impact of the removal will be. However, as with all new policies, the Government will review the removal of industrial de-rating and in this case a reasonable period of time is considered to be two years from the date of implementation, ie beginning in April 2007.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* nature and *(b)* extent of Invest Northern Ireland's involvement with the Farm Fed Chickens Company (i) was before and (ii) has been since the announcement of the closure of the company. [60836]

Angela E. Smith: Invest NI has worked closely with Farm Fed Chickens both before and after the announcement of their closure.

The most recent Financial Assistance Agreement offered to the company was in July 1996 offering support totalling £762,000. In 1999 financial assistance was also offered under the START programme for a R&D project.

More recent support has taken the form of a Competitive Assessment Diagnostic in December 2002 followed by a reassessment in August 2003, both of which resulted in improvement recommendations being provided to the Company. In October 2005 the Company was offered Sales and Marketing support under the Food Strategy Programme. Invest NI also offered to complete a DTI benchmarking exercise for the company in November 2005 to further identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Since the closure was announced, Invest NI has maintained regular contact with Farm Fed Chickens' Managing Director and has also liaised between the Coleraine Enterprise Office and the Company to offer employees advice on the 'Start a Business Programme'.

Inward Investment

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures his Department has implemented to attract inward investment to Belfast to encourage private sector growth. [60416]

Mr. Hanson: Invest NI continues to implement a strategy that promotes all areas of Northern Ireland as attractive and viable locations for new inward investment opportunities in what is a very competitive global marketplace.

To achieve this, Invest NI's marketing and sales resources are focused on those sectors and geographical markets most likely to generate projects to match the Northern Ireland business proposition and contribute to the development of an innovation-based economy.

In recent years the shift from manufacturing to predominantly tradeable service-based sectors has seen a significant change in where projects are located within Northern Ireland. Investors from these sectors place an increasing emphasis on locations with large labour pools, excellent infrastructure and close proximity to universities or centres of excellence. Consequently, Belfast and Londonderry are often the main focus of potential investors' interest.

Local Government (Strike Action)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to prevent the planned strike by local council employees in Northern Ireland [61424]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that trade unions in Northern Ireland have proposed to take industrial action because of proposals to remove the 85 year rule from the Local Government Pension Scheme. This change must be made in order to comply with the European Employment Directive 2000/78/EC which establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation and which will be implemented into UK law with effect from 1 October 2006.

Strike action is entirely a matter for trade unions and their members.

Medical Staff

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many medical staff from each of the hospital trusts in Northern Ireland have received injuries at work as the result of abusive attacks from patients under the influence of *(a)* alcohol and *(b)* drugs in each of the last five years; [60424]

(2) how much sick leave has been taken by medical staff in each hospital trust in Northern Ireland as a result of injuries caused by patients under the influence of *(a)* alcohol and *(b)* drugs in each of the last five years; [60425]

(3) how much compensation has been paid to medical staff in each hospital trust in Northern Ireland as a result of injuries received from patients under the influence of *(a)* alcohol and *(b)* drugs in each of the last five years. [60426]

Mr. Woodward: In 2004–05 there were 5,449 attacks on staff employed in the HPSS. It is not possible to attribute how many were the result attacks from patients under the influence of either alcohol or drugs as this information is not fully recorded by employers.

The Department is fully committed to improving health and safety protection for all Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) staff and there are a number of measures already in place to demonstrate this commitment e.g. personal alarms for lone workers, panic buttons and restricted access in A and E, CCTV, joint protocols between Department and PSNI on reporting incidents, publicity campaign that violent attacks on staff are crimes.

It is not possible to equate the incidence of sick leave taken by medical staff in each hospital trust in Northern Ireland as a result of injuries caused by patients under the influence of alcohol and drugs as the information contained on medical certificates may not make explicit any linkage to a violent attack.

It is not possible to state the amount of compensation paid to medical staff in each hospital trust in Northern Ireland as a result of injuries received from patients under the influence of either alcohol or drugs because employers do not hold this information.

Migrant Workers

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to ensure that the employment agencies bringing migrant workers to Northern Ireland are *(a)* regulated and *(b)* monitored in terms of employment rights and working conditions. [61493]

Angela E. Smith: Migrant workers in Northern Ireland are entitled to the same employment rights and working conditions as other workers, including benefiting from the laws relating to the conduct of employment agencies. Employment agencies and employment businesses in Northern Ireland are regulated by Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 ('Conduct Regulations'). The Conduct Regulations, which came into operation on 25 September 2005, were subject to two full public consultations. They establish a framework of minimum standards that the work-seekers and employers who use employment agencies can expect, including establishing the suitability of work-seekers for vacancies, agreeing terms and conditions, placing controls on client accounts and record-keeping, and clarifying arrangements for charges and fees. Under the 1981 Order, the Department for Employment and Learning has responsibility for enforcing the legislation, including powers to prosecute offenders and in more serious cases, seeking a prohibition notice from an industrial tribunal to prevent an individual from operating an agency for up to ten years.

Under powers granted in the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 the Department may also enter and inspect employment agency premises and records to ensure compliance with the Conduct Regulations. A schedule of inspections, undertaken by the Trading Standards Service on behalf of the Department, will commence from April 2006. The inspections will be scheduled based on the perceived risks of vulnerable groups, including migrant workers and as such a high priority will be attached to their interests. The Department will investigate all complaints brought to its attention in respect of employment agencies.

In addition the Department has produced and distributed guidance material aimed at those affected by legislation governing the recruitment sector, including material to assist migrant workers in Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Tetum and Lithuanian.

Oncology Services

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time is for oncology services in Northern Ireland; how many people in each Northern Ireland health board area are on waiting lists for oncology treatment; and if he will make a statement. [60418]

Mr. Woodward: Waiting list information is collected by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the arithmetic mean (average) length of time waiting. It is however possible to identify the median or mid-point waiting time band. The median waiting time band for assessment or treatment in the medical and clinical oncology specialties in Northern Ireland at 31 December 2005 was 0 to 2 months.

Belfast City hospital, the sole provider of oncology services in Northern Ireland, has further advised that in the first two months of this year 95 per cent. of patients were assessed by an oncologist in outpatients within five weeks of referral and, of these, 75 per cent. were seen within two weeks.

Belfast City hospital has confirmed that all patients are seen and treated within clinically significant time bands as recommended by the Joint Council for Oncology (Royal Colleges of Radiology and Physicians).

The number of patients on the waiting list for medical and clinical oncology, for outpatient assessment and inpatient treatment, by health board of residence, at 31 December 2005 is shown in the table.

Health Board of Residence	*Outpatient waiters at 31 December 2005*	*Inpatient waiters at 31 December 2005*
Northern	37	0
Eastern	93	4
Southern	46	19
Western	19	0
Total	195	23

Source:

Board monthly return CHA (inpatients waiting) and departmental information return CH3 (outpatients waiting).

Planning Applications

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications were deferred after coming before local councils for consultation on a first occasion in Northern Ireland between January *(a)* 2005 and 2006 and *(b)* 2004 and 2005. [60071]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Between 1 January and 31 December 2005 a total of 9,642 applications were deferred on first presentation to the local council.

(b) Between 1 January and 31 December 2004 a total of 7,940 applications were deferred on first presentation to the local council.

Police Numbers

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers there are in each division of each police force in Northern Ireland; and what is the population of the area covered by each division. [52282]

Mr. Woodward: The number of police officers and the population in each District Command Unit is provided on the following table:

Distrcit Command Unit	*Total*	*Population 2001 Census*
Antrim	194	48,366
Newtownards	230	73,244
Armagh	172	54,263
Ballymena	190	58,610
Ballymoney	80	26,894
Banbridge	143	41,392
Belfast, East	334	Total Belfast 277,391
Belfast, North	467	
Belfast, South	503	
Belfast, West	313	
Carrickfergus	129	37,659
Castlereagh	191	66,488
Coleraine	218	56,315
Cookstown	102	32,581
Craigavon	242	80,671
Down	214	63,828
Dungannon and South Tyrone	174	47,735
Fermanagh	223	57,527
Foyle	310	105,066
Larne	96	30,832
Limavady	100	32,422
Lisburn	389	108,694
Magherafelt	114	39,780
Moyle	47	15,933
Newry and Mourne	251	87,058
Newtownabbey	253	79,995
North Down	218	76,323
Omagh	164	47,952
Strabane	159	38,248
Total	6,220	1,685,267

Primary Schools

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1742W, on primary schools, if he will break down the number of surplus places in each constituency by education sector. [60835]

Angela E. Smith: Based upon 2005 enrolments, there are an estimated 33,600 surplus places in primary schools throughout the parliamentary constituencies and the breakdown is as follows.

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of surplus places*	*Controlled primary schools*	*Maintained primary schools*	*Irish medium primary schools*	*Integrated primary schools (includes controlled and grant maintained)*
Belfast, East	2,050	1,850	200	—	—
Belfast, North	3,500	2,000	1,475	25	—
Belfast, South	2,400	1,750	575	—	75
Belfast, West	3,450	1,150	2,000	300	—
East Londonderry	1,700	875	750	—	75
Foyle	2,150	450	1,700	—	—
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	2,100	625	1,450	—	25
East Antrim	1,300	475	750	—	75
Lagan Valley	1,650	1,175	400	—	75
Mid-Ulster	500	200	300	—	—
Newry and Armagh	1,700	350	1,325	25	—
North Antrim	2,200	1,375	825	—	—
North Down	1,550	1,375	150	—	25
South Antrim	1,850	650	775	—	425
South Down	1,250	175	1,025	—	50
Strangford	1,050	650	400	—	—
Upper Bann	1,600	800	790	—	10
West Tyrone	1,600	150	1,450	—	—
Total	33,600	16,075	16,340	350	835

Prisoners (Resettlement)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resettlement payments were made to those prisoners who were released early under the terms of the Belfast agreement. [60791]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Londonderry (Mr. Campbell) on 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 537W.

Recruitment Advertising

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will change the method of Government recruitment advertising in Northern Ireland to ensure that such job vacancies are advertised in publications read by all main sections of the community. [61108]

Angela E. Smith: Recruitment advertising for vacancies in the Northern Ireland civil service is governed by the Northern Ireland civil service commissioners' code and is in accordance with the Department of Finance and Personnel's Equality Scheme. Advertisements are placed in three local daily papers to achieve a broad readership across the community. For some specialist posts a wider range of publications may be used. All vacancies are also advertised on the recruitment service website and the Jobcentre online website.

A review of government advertising is underway and a report is due to be published in April.

Visual Impairment

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils in Northern Ireland assessed as blind left school with *(a)* five or more and *(b)* no GCSE passes in each of the last three years. [60612]

Angela E. Smith: Figures for 2004–05 are not yet available. Out of a total of 15 children with a statement of special educational needs who were recorded as blind and who left school in the previous three years, seven achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-G, and six achieved no GCSEs. Because of the very small numbers in any one year, it is not appropriate to break the figures down into individual years.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision is made in schools in Northern Ireland for children who have sight loss. [60609]

Angela E. Smith: Education and Library Boards (ELBs) assess and make provision for pupils on an individual basis, in line with the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Special Educational Needs and the supplement to it.

All of the ELBs have staff qualified to teach children with visual impairments, including those staff attached to the peripatetic support services. In addition support is available from Jordanstown Schools' outreach service.

Depending on the needs of the individual, ELBs make available large print literature, Braillers and appropriate ICT equipment and software. Schools themselves may also purchase specialist items through their dedicated SEN budgets.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland who suffer from sight loss are *(a)* unemployed and *(b)* on incapacity benefit. [60610]

Mr. Hanson: Information is not available on the number of Jobseekers Allowance claimants who are suffering from sight loss. At August 2005, 234 people on incapacity benefit were categorised as suffering from blindness or low vision.

Hospital Television and Telephone Facilities

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what firms provide personal television and telephone facilities to patients at hospitals in

Northern Ireland; what daily rates are charged in each case; how many patients at each hospital have used these facilities in each of the last three years; and whether concessionary rates are available to long-term patients at each hospital. [60427]

Mr. Woodward: The provision of personal television and telephone services in hospitals are matters for individual Health and Social Services Trusts. Trusts have provided the following information about these services.

		Daily rates			
Trust	*Service provider*	*Television*	*Telephone*	*Number of patients availing of facilities in previous three years*	*Concessions offered for long stay patients*
Belfast City Hospital Trust	Patientline UK Ltd.	£3.50 per day (24 hour access)	Outgoing calls from the bed—10p per minute Incoming calls: Peak—49p per minute. Off peak—39p per minute	Information not available	Television: Patients 60 and over—50 per cent. discount. Long stay patients (over 2 weeks) 50 per cent. discount. Free television for children (under 16). Free television to patients who may benefit from the service but unable to afford it (at the discretion of ward staff)
Royal Group of Hospitals Trust	Patientline UK Ltd.	£3.50 per day (24 hour access)	Outgoing calls from the bed-10p per minute. Incoming calls: Peak —49p per minute Off peak—39p per minute	Information not available	Television: Patients 60 and over—£1.70. Long stay patients (over 2 weeks)—£1.70. Free to age 16 and under. Everyone gets 1 hour of free TV a day
Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust	Patientline UK Ltd.	£3.50 per day (24 hour access)	Outgoing calls from the bed—10p per minute Incoming calls: Peak —49p per minute. Off peak—3 9p per minute	Information not available	Television: Patients 60 and over—£1.70. Long stay patients (over 2 weeks)—£1.70. Free to age 16 and under. Everyone gets 1 hour of free TV a day
Mater Hospital Trust	Hospital Telephone Services Ltd.	—	£2 for continuous 24hr period for the rental of equipment; 10p per minute for outgoing calls; 17p per minute for incoming calls	Information not available	No concessionary rates
Causeway Hospital Trust	BT Payphone Services (bedside only)	—	Outgoing calls at BT payphone rates. Incoming calls 25p per minute from BT landlines	Information not available	No concessionary rates

Theft/Vandalism (Primary Schools)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the cost of *(a)* vandalism and *(b)* theft to (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in East Londonderry constituency in 2005. [59822]

Angela E. Smith: The cost of vandalism to controlled and maintained schools in the East Londonderry constituency in 2005 is as follows:

	Amount (£)
Nursery	545
Primary	9,486
Secondary	11,063
Special	164
Total	21,258

The cost in relation to theft in schools is only available for the Western Education and Library Board. This amounted to £8,405 in the 2005 calendar year. The North Eastern Education and Library Board cannot provide the figure until May 2006 when their yearly statement of losses are collated.

The cost of vandalism and theft in voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools is not available, Such costs are borne by individual schools from their LMS budget or are the subject of insurance claims.

Witness Protection

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department spent on witness protection in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06; and what the projected spending is for 2006–07. [59690]

Mr. Woodward: This is an operational matter for the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

CABINET OFFICE

Better Regulation Task Force

Mr. Willis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what advice members of the Better Regulation Task Force have provided to the Government; and whether the advice is published. [61042]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Better Regulation Task Force was an independent advisory body, established in 1997 to advise the Government on regulatory issues. At the end of 2005 it was replaced by the Better Regulation Commission.

During its existence the Better Regulation Task Force undertook over 40 studies on a wide range of regulatory issues and published its advice and recommendations in a series of reports.

The final report produced by the Task Force "Better Regulation—from design to delivery—the 2005 report of the Better Regulation Task Force" summarises this work.

The reports were distributed to the Libraries and are available on the Better Regulation Commission website www.brc.gov.uk, or in hard copy from the Better Regulation Commission Secretariat.

As an Advisory Body, the Task Force also responded to Consultation Documents and contributed to the wider debate on better regulation in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many and what proportion of *(a)* staff and *(b)* new staff employed in his Department were registered as disabled in each of the last three years for which data are available. [61376]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Data on the number of staff who are registered as disabled is published annually. The latest published data is for 1 April 2004 and is available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls.

Archived data prior to 2004 is available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/archive/index.asp.

Data for 2005 will be published shortly by the Corporate Development Group in the Cabinet Office.

The number and proportion of new Cabinet Office staff registered as disabled for the last 3 years is given in the table.

Declaration of a disability is voluntary.

New staff joining between	*Number*	*As a percentage of new staff joining during that year*
1 April 2002–31 March 2003	6	2.2
1 April 2003–31 March 2004	7	3.0
1 April 2004–31 March 2005	8	2.8

Source:
Human Resource Personnel database.

Directgov Website

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which Government departments are not included in the Directgov website. [60159]

Mr. Jim Murphy: 18 government departments have actively contributed to the content that is available on Directgov. Of the main government departments, those who do not currently participate are the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development. We are working with these departments to develop their future participation.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the running cost of the Directgov website was in 2005; and how many hits the website received in that year. [60160]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Gross direct expenditure on Directgov by the Cabinet Office in 2004–05, including operations and development was £5 million. In addition £0.4 million was contributed to shared hosting costs, making a total of £5.4 million. Figures for 2005–06 are not yet available.

From 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005, Directgov received 75,572,068 page views from 17,621,999 visits.

IT Projects

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what reviews are carried out at the preliminary stages of the implementation of Government information technology projects. [60158]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

All Central Civil Government departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies are mandated to apply OGC Gateway Reviews to all procurement programmes and projects. The OGC Gateway review process provides assurance at critical stages of a project/programme including the Gate 4 Review, which focuses primarily on readiness for service.

No. 10 Downing Street

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the expenditure by the Cabinet Office was on No. 10 Downing street in each year since 1999; and how much was spent on *(a)* repairs and refurbishment to the fabric of the building, *(b)* furnishings and *(c)* other expenditure in each year. [59415]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Refurbishment and maintenance at 10 Downing street is part of a continuing programme of work. The Downing street complex is maintained to standards appropriate to its Grade 1/2 listed status in consultation with English Heritage. The building also fulfils an important representational role.

For details on the total cost of refurbishment, maintenance and structural improvements for the whole of the Downing street complex for the last three years, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Bridgewater (Mr. Liddell-Granger) on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2393W.

For details on how much has been spent on maintaining, decorating and otherwise improving 10 Downing street since 1999, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1934W.

Expenditure on furnishings since 1999 is shown in the table.

	Furnishings (£)
1999–2000	17,702
2000–01	15,765

	Furnishings (£)
2001–02	25,002
2002–03	10,295
2003–04	28,701
2004–05	29,849

Other expenditure on 10 Downing street comprises local authority rates, utility and facilities management charges. For these purposes the Downing street complex forms an integral part of the Cabinet Office estate. Figures are therefore included in Cabinet Office costs. I refer the hon. Member to the answer which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave to the hon. Member for Angus (Mr. Weir) on 12 January 2006, *Official Report,* column 743W, and my subsequent letter of 18 January 2006. A copy of the letter is available in the Library.

TREASURY

Concessionary Travel

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what formula was used to allocate funding for the concessionary travel scheme to local authorities. [61245]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government are providing an extra £350 million for 2006–07 through the Formula Grant system.

The £350 million announced in Budget 2005 for the expansion of the concessionary fares scheme included reimbursement to operators for lost income, additional costs due to the increase in generated users, the reimbursement of authorities already offering free off-peak local bus travel, and inflation.

Consumer Credit

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the progress of his review of the regulation of *(a)* money service businesses, *(b)* trust and company service providers, *(c)* payment service providers and *(d)* firms providing consumer credit. [57994]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Post-Implementation Review (PIR) for the regulation of Money Service Businesses is well under way. The Government intend to publish a consultation document and an accompanying RIA in late spring, after the current pre-consultation engagement with the sector is concluded.

The Third EC Money Laundering Directive requires that trust and company service providers be monitored for their compliance with Directive and subject to a fit and proper test for the purposes of preventing money laundering and terrorist financing. The Directive needs to be implemented into UK law by December 2007 and the Government will publish a consultation document this spring which will consider how best to meet its requirements.

The European Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive on payment services in December 2005. This Directive will create a new regulatory regime for payment service providers across the EU, and is currently being considered by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The Government will consult on its implementation in due course.

The Consumer Credit Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 18 May 2005, will reform the Consumer Credit Act 1974, improving the regulation of consumer credit business and enhancing consumers' rights and redress mechanisms.

The Government's 10-point plan for reforming the regulation of financial services, which included improving consumer credit regulation through better joint working between the FSA and OFT, was published in the 2005 pre-Budget report and will be updated in due course.

Departmental Policies

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Islington, South and Finsbury constituency, the effects on Islington, South and Finsbury of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [60736]

John Healey: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macro-economic and micro-economic reform designed to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Islington, South and Finsbury constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment in Islington, South and Finsbury has fallen by 45 per cent., while long-term youth unemployment has fallen by 54 per cent. and adult unemployment has fallen by over 85 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./

Euro

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the costs to business of the introduction of the euro. [60903]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It is not possible to estimate the cost of introducing the euro. The cost of a changeover would depend on a number of individual factors, for example the timing, the overall approach and individual management decisions.

Gap Year and Volunteering Scheme (Wales)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the new gap year and volunteering scheme budget of £150 million will be allocated to Wales. [61669]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Welsh Assembly Government received Barnett formula consequentials in the normal way, at Budget 2005, when the allocation was made to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission report on youth volunteering. The Welsh

Assembly Government are funded on a block budget basis and it is for the Welsh Assembly to decide how to allocate its block budget.

Hedge Funds

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to regulate firms which manage hedge funds domiciled outside of the UK. [61115]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Firms that are based in the UK that undertake investment management business are required to be authorised and regulated by the FSA even if the funds that they manage are domiciled outside the UK.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the remit of the Financial Services Authority specialist hedge fund supervision team includes firms which manage hedge funds domiciled outside the UK. [61116]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The remit of the FSA's specialist hedge fund supervision team covers firms which manage hedge funds domiciled outside the UK.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether firms managing hedge funds domiciled outside the UK have an obligation to report to UK authorities on overseas transactions. [61117]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: A UK authorised and regulated firm is required to report to the FSA's markets division for market monitoring purposes the investment transactions it undertakes. This includes those firms outside the UK, unless the firm is a member of a foreign exchange on which they trade, in which case they would be subject to the reporting requirements of the foreign exchange.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there is a requirement to register in the UK transfers of funds from the UK to overseas-based hedge funds. [61118]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are no general requirements in the UK to register transfers of monies for investment purposes. However, financial sector firms are required by UK law to put into place anti-money-laundering controls, and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 introduces a number of requirements to report knowledge or suspicion of money laundering to the National Criminal Intelligence Service (or the Serious Organised Crime Agency from 1 April 2006).

Identity Fraud

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of identity fraud among its employees. [60295]

John Healey: Appropriate steps have been taken to remind key staff in the Treasury of the importance of safeguarding confidential information.

Incentive Tools

Mr. Todd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2416W, on incentive tools, if he will place a copy of the report of the joint research referred to in the Library. [61012]

Mr. Des Browne: Three final reports have been produced by the University of Bristol, evaluating the introduction of incentive schemes in Jobcentre Plus, HM Customs and Excise and the Child Support Agency. These reports will be placed in the Library as requested.

Meningitis

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children died from meningitis and associated conditions in each of the last five years. [61101]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many children died from meningitis and associated conditions in each of the last five years. (61101)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2004. The table below shows the number of deaths from bacterial and viral meningitis and other meningococcal diseases in children aged 0 to 15 in England and Wales for the years 2000 to 2004.

Number of deaths in children under 16 (aged 0–15) from bacterial and viral meningitis and other meningococcal diseases[1], *England and Wales, 2000 to 2004*[2]

	Number of deaths
2000	295
2001	266
2002	204
2003	242
2004	193

[1] Figures selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 036, 047, 320 and 322 for 2000, and the Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes A39, A87, and G00-G03 for 2001 onwards.

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Minimum Hourly Pay

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the direct costs would be of introducing a minimum hourly rate of pay of *(a)* £5.75, *(b)* £6.00 and *(c)* £6.50 for all employees in the public sector; and if he will make a statement. [59337]

Mr. Des Browne: Our usual source for these figures is the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) collected by the Office for National Statistics. In this case, however, it has not been possible to obtain these figures. The ASHE is unable to provide estimates of the number of people earning below these thresholds, on a statistically reliable basis (only proportions of people are available), and consequently it has not been possible to perform the calculation that is requested.

Mortality Rates

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the standardised mortality rate per 100,000 population has been for *(a)* cancer, *(b)* coronary heart disease and *(c)* respiratory disease in each year since 1997. [61272]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell dated 27 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent parliamentary question asking what the standardised mortality rate per 100,000 population has been for *(a)* cancer, *(b)* coronary heart disease and *(c)* respiratory disease in each year since 1997. (61272)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2004. The attached table shows the age-standardised death rate in persons of all ages by underlying cause of death in England and Wales for the years 1997 to 2004.

Age-standardised death rate[1] in persons of all ages, by underlying cause of death, England and Wales, 1997 to 2004[2]

	(a) Cancer[3]	*(b) Coronary heart disease*[4]	*(c) Respiratory diseases*[5]
1997	196.2	159.6	109.7
1998	195.5	156.0	105.9
1999	190.9	147.0	114.0
2000	187.0	136.7	106.3
2001[6]	188.0	131.4	77.2
2002[6]	187.1	125.6	78.9
2003[6]	183.6	120.4	84.6
2004[6]	180.3	110.4	76.9

[1] Rate per 100,000 population standardised to the European standard population.

[2] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[3] Selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 140–208 for the years 1997 to 2000, and the Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes COO–C97 for 2001 onwards.

[4] Selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 410–414 for the years 1997 to 2000, and the Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes 120–125 for 2001 onwards.

[5] Selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 460–519 for the years 1997 to 2000, and the Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes JOO-J99 for 2001 onwards.

[6] The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in 2001 means that figures are not completely comparable with data for years before this date. The data should therefore be interpreted with caution. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on mortality is described in an article published in 'Health Statistics Quarterly Summer 2002' on 23 May 2002. More information about these changes, as well, as the results of the study, can be found on the NS website at www.statistics.gov.uk/icd10mortality.

Non-fossil Purchasing Agency

Colin Challen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what funds have flowed to the Consolidated Fund from the Non-fossil Purchasing Agency's surpluses; and what he estimates that income to be by 2010. [60573]

John Healey: The total amount paid to the Consolidated Fund from the Non-fossil Purchasing Agency's surpluses is £210 million. This was made up of a payment of £60 million in July 2004 and a payment of £150 million in September 2005.

The Treasury has not made an estimate of income up to 2010.

Pensioners (Free Travel)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of extending the *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 2006 budget announcement of free bus travel for pensioners to passenger ferries. [61549]

Mr. Des Browne: The Treasury has made no estimate of the cost of extending free bus travel for pensioners to passenger ferries.

Pensions

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newmark) of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 775W, on pensions, what the accrued liability as at 31 March 2005 would have been using a discount rate equal to the *(a)* yield on long-dated AA rated corporate bonds and *(b)* yield on long-dated index-linked Government stock on that date. [61416]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1645W.

Recycling

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make further changes to taxation to encourage the production of paper using recycled materials. [61244]

John Healey: The Chancellor considers all relevant economic, social and environmental factors when deciding taxation policy. Any changes are announced by the Chancellor in the context of his Budget Statement.

Suicides (Farmers)

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many farmers have committed suicide in England and Wales in each year since 2000. [60998]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many farmers have committed suicide in England and Wales in each year since 2000. (60998)

I refer you to the answer given by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on the 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 645W.

Tax Credits

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government collects information on the number of hours worked by recipients of tax credits. [60604]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the number of hours worked by in-work families with tax credit awards as at December 2005 is available in "Child and Working Tax

Credits Statistics: December 2005". This publication can be found at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/dec05_quarterly_dec05.xls

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of each social security and tax credit payment was as a percentage of gross domestic product in each year since 1997. [60613]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Figures for social security and tax credits spending are published each year in Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis.

Figures for gross domestic product are published on the HM Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/gdp_deflators/data_gdp_fig.cfm

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the take-up rate of each category of tax credit was in each year since 1997. [60615]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on take-up of child tax credit and working tax credit in 2003–04 is available in "Child tax credit and working tax credit: Take-up rates—2003–04". This publication can be found at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/takeup_rates_2003-04_mar06.pdf

Information on take-up of working families tax credit (the predecessor to child tax credit and working tax credit) for 2000–01 to 2002–03 is available in the "Working families tax credit take-up rates" publications. These publications can be found at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/wftc/takeup rates.htm

Value Added Tax

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the arrangements proposed to exempt from value added tax new buildings for *(a)* city academies with community use and *(b)* other youth and education facilities with community use. [61727]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: VAT is not chargeable on the construction of academies, or parts of academy buildings, provided that use of the building for which a charge is made will account for less than 10 per cent. of its total use under this relief. Taking the year as a whole (including non-term time) a 1,000 student institution could potentially provide charged extended services for an average of around 50 people per day.

VAT agreements with our European partners mean that while we can maintain this relief for the construction of charitable buildings, it cannot be extended further. DfES and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will explore with academies how community use of their facilities might be maximised, consistent with this VAT relief.

If VAT is chargeable on construction of any part of an academy building, this can be reclaimed from HMRC to the extent that the building is to be used for a taxable business purpose. DfES and HMRC will also explore with academies how any remaining VAT costs might be managed within the current rules—for example by allowing academies to spread VAT costs relating to non-business use of their facilities over a 20-year period.

In relation to other youth and education facilities, the VAT relief detailed applies for buildings constructed for charities. Where VAT is chargeable on construction, this can be reclaimed from HMRC to the extent that it relates to taxable business use of the facilities. In addition, local authorities can usually reclaim from HMRC all VAT costs relating to schools and other youth and community facilities that they maintain.

Where VAT is chargeable and not reclaimable from HMRC, it is legitimate for bids for grants or public funding to include relevant overhead costs, such as this irrecoverable VAT.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work Scheme

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has for public sector employers to make use of the Access to Work scheme; and if he will make a statement. [59852]

Mrs. McGuire: The Access to Work programme is open to people who meet the eligibility criteria irrespective of whether they work for private or public sector employers, or on their own account.

There has been a year on year increase in the numbers of disabled people who, through this programme, have been helped to either take up or retain paid work.

Asbestos Regulations

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what enforcement measures are in place to ensure that existing regulations on the use of asbestos are adhered to. [59004]

Mrs. McGuire: The Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992 prohibit the importation, supply and use (namely the manufacture) of asbestos and asbestos-containing products into the United Kingdom. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) are the enforcing authority for these regulations and to their knowledge there is no manufacture of asbestos-containing products within the UK. HSE have the authority to grant exceptions to the prohibition of supply and importation. Such an exemption is granted only in exceptional circumstances with strict conditions applied by HSE.

However, asbestos-containing materials were widely used up to the implementation of these regulations. Although it is difficult to give a precise figure, it was estimated in 2000, that 500,000 commercial premises contain asbestos products. Asbestos products present no risk to a person unless its condition deteriorates and asbestos fibres are released. Therefore the principal duty on the person in control of these premises is Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 regulation 4, commonly known as the Duty to Manage. HSE Inspectors and Local Authority Environmental Health Officers enforce this legislation. The Duty to Manage is one of the strands of HSE's Disease Reduction Programme, which sets out a schedule of work to seek compliance with this legislation. There is a range of enforcement powers available to secure compliance, including the issue of enforcement notices and taking legal proceedings.

When work has to be carried out on the asbestos material, including its removal, then it is subject to the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations. This requires that prior to the commencement of work that a suitable risk assessment is carried out to determine the appropriate control measures required to prevent, or reduce to the lowest level practicable, exposure to asbestos fibres. HSE Inspectors and Local Authority Environmental Health Officers have the same enforcement powers as for the Duty to Manage Asbestos.

For high-risk activities, work is also subject to Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983. These prohibit an employer or self-employed person from carrying out any significant work with asbestos insulation, asbestos coatings and asbestos insulating board unless HSE's Asbestos Licensing Unit has granted them a licence. The applicant is subject to a rigorous assessment prior to any licence being granted. HSE have the authority to apply any conditions on a licence, refuse, amend, or revoke a licence. A licence is granted for a fixed period and the applicant is subject to a further assessment on re-application. A condition on all licences is that work with asbestos is notified to the relevant enforcing authority. HSE carry out site visits for a sample of this notified work, and if acceptable standards are not met take suitable enforcement action, which includes letters, enforcement notices and prosecutions. In addition relevant information is fed-back to the Asbestos Licensing Unit, to enable the terms and conditions of an individual licence to be continually reviewed.

Benefits

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many applications for *(a)* mobility allowance, *(b)* disability living allowance and *(c)* attendance allowance were allowed in each year between 2000 and 2005 (i) on application and (ii) on appeal, broken down by region; and if he will make a statement. [55521]

Mrs. McGuire: The requested information for mobility allowance is not available because the benefit was replaced by the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance in April 1992. The available information for disability living allowance and attendance allowance is in the tables.

Disability living allowance: number[1] of new awards[2] (a) on initial claims; and (b) on appeal in each Government office region[3] in Great Britain and in total in each year from 2000–01 to 2004–05

Government office region	*North East*	*North West*	*Yorkshire and Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*	*East*
Awards on initial claims						
2000–01	10.5	29.8	21.0	14.8	20.9	16.6
2001–02	9.9	33.1	20.7	14.2	20.5	18.2
2002–03	9.5	33.6	23.5	17.1	21.7	19.3
2003–04	8.5	31.5	20.3	15.5	20.0	17.6
2004–05	7.5	29.3	17.1	14.1	18.1	16.1
Awards on appeal						
2000–01	2.1	5.6	2.2	1.4	1.4	1.2
2001–02	3.1	4.6	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.2
2002–03	1.9	4.4	2.4	1.4	2.2	1.2
2003–04	2.2	3.8	2.1	2.0	2.3	1.0
2004–05	2.6	4.5	2.1	1.6	2.0	1.0

Government office region	*London*	*South East*	*South West*	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Total*
Awards on initial claims						
2000–01	24.5	19.9	14.4	14.0	21.4	207.9
2001–02	25.4	20.6	14.7	15.3	21.4	214.1
2002–03	28.9	22.2	16.3	16.5	23.4	232.0
2003–04	26.1	23.8	16.2	15.5	22.1	217.2
2004–05	23.5	22.2	17.6	13.8	22.1	201.5
Awards on appeal						
2000–01	2.8	1.6	1.6	2.0	4.8	26.8
2001–02	3.7	2.2	2.0	2.1	6.1	31.5
2002–03	3.3	2.2	2.1	1.8	5.6	28.6
2003–04	3.0	1.9	1.7	1.5	5.2	26.7
2004–05	3.5	2.2	1.6	1.7	5.5	28.2

[1] Figures are based on the 5 per cent. QSE data (and are therefore subject to sampling variation) and are expressed in thousands, rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

[2] Awards may be for a care component only, or for a mobility component only, or for a care component and a mobility component.

[3] Awards have been allocated to Government office regions using the ONS postcode directory.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 5 per cent. samples for detail/long time series.

Attendance allowance: number[1] of new awards (a) on initial claims; and (b) on appeal in each Government office region[2] in Great Britain and in total in each year from 2000–01 to 2004–05

Government office region	*North East*	*North West*	*Yorkshire and Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*	*East*
Awards on initial claims						
2000–01	14.9	38.6	28.4	24.7	31.1	30.1
2001–02	14.0	36.2	24.4	21.8	27.9	29.0
2002–03	14.2	37.4	25.5	20.9	28.6	29.6
2003–04	14.1	40.5	23.9	22.9	30.7	30.2
2004–05	14.9	39.8	23.7	22.6	29.5	29.8
Awards on appeal						
2000–01	*0.4	0.7	*0.4	*0.3	*0.4	*0.3
2001–02	0.5	*0.4	*0.4	*0.4	*0.4	*0.3
2002–03	*0.3	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	*0.3
2003–04	*0.4	0.6	0.6	*0.4	*0.4	*0.2
2004–05	*0.4	*0.2	0.5	*0.4	*0.4	*0.3

Government office region	*London*	*South East*	*South West*	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Total*
Awards on initial claims						
2000–01	26.2	36.9	32.8	17.4	28.5	309.6
2001–02	27.0	37.8	28.4	18.0	25.9	290.4
2002–03	28.0	40.4	32.3	17.8	29.8	304.5
2003–04	30.2	44.5	35.1	19.1	31.3	322.6
2004–05	25.9	42.0	33.3	19.8	29.4	310.7
Awards on appeal						
2000–01	0.5	0.6	*0.3	*0.3	1.1	5.2
2001–02	0.6	0.7	*0.3	*0.3	1.4	5.7
2002–03	0.5	0.7	*0.3	*0.3	0.9	5.8
2003–04	*0.4	0.5	*0.2	*0.2	0.7	4.7
2004–05	0.7	0.5	*0.3	*0.2	0.7	4.5

[1] Figures are based on the 5 per cent. QSE data (and are therefore subject to sampling variation—those below 500 are subject to a high degree of sampling error and are marked "*") and are expressed in thousands, rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

[2] Awards have been allocated to Government office regions using the ONS postcode directory

Source:

DWP Information Directorate

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what collaborative projects his Department has undertaken with the Staffordshire police authority to combat fraudulent activities in relation to benefits; and if he will make a statement. [58078]

Mr. Plaskitt: Investigators from the Department for Work and Pensions collaborate with officers from Staffordshire police authority on cases where they have a common interest and where the Department requires police assistance.

The Department is currently collaborating with the police authority on a number of multi-agency investigations into illegal workers using false identities, some of whom were suspected of benefit fraud. The investigations are continuing, and so far a number of people have received custodial sentences; others are still awaiting prosecution.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what changes the Department has made in decision-making arrangements for the referral of cases of potential fraud for criminal investigation since April 2003. [59000]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* There have been no changes in the decision-making process for the referral of cases of potential fraud for criminal investigation since April 2003. The current process is based on a computerised scoring system, the Fraud Referral Intelligent Scorecard (FRISc). Using this system, each referral is given a score based on pre-determined criteria. Cases that attain a score above a set level are referred for investigation by the Fraud Investigation Service.

From 1 April 2006, we are introducing a revised referral decision system that will also identify cases that require action at a level below the criminal law standard. Cases identified under the new system will be referred for action by Customer Compliance Officers. Customer Compliance Officers will deal with cases of lower level fraud, enabling the Fraud Investigation Service to concentrate its resource on cases requiring criminal investigation.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what targets his Department has set to ensure that claims for *(a)* jobseeker's allowance, *(b)* income support and *(c)* incapacity benefit are paid at the earliest possible date after the initial claim has been made; [48977]

(2) what steps he is taking to ensure benefits are paid to claimants in the Chesham and Amersham constituency as quickly as possible after a claim is made. [48978]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answers 6 February 2006]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your questions asking what targets his Department has set to ensure that claims for *(a)* Jobseeker's Allowance, *(b)* Income Support and *(c)* Incapacity Benefit are paid at the earliest possible date after the initial claim has been made, and what steps he is taking to ensure benefits are paid to claimants in the Chesham and Amersham constituency as quickly as possible after a claim is made. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus does not have targets for benefit processing times. However, data relating to claim clearance times is collected and measured against "acceptable standards of delivery" that are set at the beginning of each year. By this we mean how many working days it takes, on average, to process benefit claims. This is referred to as the Actual Average Clearance Time (AACT) and each benefit is set its own AACT benchmark.

The information requested is in the table.

	Acceptable standards of delivery (days)
Jobseeker's Allowance	12
Income Support	12
Incapacity Benefit	19

A range of actions are underway to improve benefit clearance times in the Chesham and Amersham constituency. These include:

moving work around the Benefit Delivery Centre network;

drafting in additional staff and telephone teams;

establishing dedicated arrears clearance teams; and

deploying experienced officers on more complex claims to reduce delays.

These actions are designed to deal with outstanding claims by the beginning of April. New claims for Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Income Support are already being delivered within acceptable average clearance times.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the annual cost of uprating housing benefit and council tax benefit earnings disregards for *(a)* a single person to £8.35, *(b)* a couple to £16.75, *(c)* higher rate recipients to £25.10 and *(d)* lone parents to £38. [59800]

Mr. Plaskitt: The estimated additional benefit expenditure that would arise from such an uprating is in the following table.

Annual cost of uprating housing benefit and council tax benefit earnings disregards

£ million

	Housing benefit	*Council tax benefit*
Single person to £8.35	9	2
Couple to £16.75	16	8
Higher rate recipients to £25.10	4	2
Lone parents to £38	38	7
Total	67	19

Notes:

1. The costs are rounded to the nearest £1 million and are for Great Britain.
2. The impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06, using data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.
3. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 590W, on benefits, what the principal reasons were for the decision not to implement the simplification of the non-dependent deduction regime proposed in the Housing Green Paper, "Quality and Choice: A decent Home for All", in 2000; and if he will make a statement. [57960]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Government's reasons for not taking forward options to simplify non-dependent deductions were set out in paragraph 10.54 of "The Way Forward for Housing" published in December 2000:

> "There are a number of changes raised in the Green Paper which we don't intend to pursue at this time. These include further reform of disregards, tapers and non-dependent deductions. Given the current problems, sorting out the administration, combined with our "benefit run-ons", will have more impact on work incentives than changing additional rules in these areas".

Although we have not taken forward the options in the Green Paper, there have been reforms to the non-dependent deduction scheme. From October 2003, if the householder or their partner is aged 65 or more, and a non-dependant moves into their home or an existing non-dependant's circumstances change to increase the deduction, then the start of the deduction or increase in deduction is delayed for 26 weeks. Also, from April 2005, if the non-dependant is on pension credit, no deduction is made in respect of that non-dependant.

However, as with all aspects of the benefit system, the provisions for non-dependants in housing benefit will continue to remain under review.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Denton and Reddish constituency, *(b)* Tameside metropolitan borough and *(c)* Stockport metropolitan borough are in receipt of (i) disability benefit and (ii) income support. [58008]

Mr. Plaskitt: The most recent available information is in the table.

Income support and disability living allowance claimants: August 2005

	Income support	*Disability living allowance*
Denton and Reddish constituency	3,600	5,300
Tameside MBC	9,500	13,000
Stockport MBC	8,100	12,200

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred .

2. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003. Residual MIG cases have been excluded from the income support figures. These are mainly cases where the claimant is aged under 60 and the partner over 60.

3. Disability living allowance figures show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example where they are in hospital.

Source:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average cost is of making a home visit to benefit *(a)* claimants and *(b)* recipients. [52223]

Mr. Plaskitt: Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service staff carry out home visits. Home visits carried out by Jobcentre Plus can include work on behalf of other agencies. Information to enable an estimate of the average cost of home visits made by Jobcentre Plus is not routinely collected and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Pension Service Local Service offer a holistic full benefit check service on all home visits, regardless of the original referral reason for the visit. The average cost of a home visit is the same for both new and existing customers, as a visit may be made to a pension credit recipient, which results in a new application for another benefit. The average cost of a home visit is £75 per visit to both claimants and recipients.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to ensure deaf adults claim the benefits to which they are entitled. [57720]

Mrs. McGuire: The Disability and Carer Service (DCS) have a number of initiatives in place to help people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These include the Customer Information Leaflet (CIL) which is produced in British Sign Language (BSL) in both video and DVD format. All DCS offices have text-phones with text-phone numbers that are published to the public. Typetalk is also available (a BT service that enables a customer who is deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired to communicate via a third party on the telephone).

For face-to-face contact with customers accessing our services, some DCS staff have BSL interpreting qualifications and DCS staff can also book external BSL interpreters via RNID or contact the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP). In addition, DCS are currently producing an information video and DVD, "You Can Benefit", which includes subtitles, audio and a BSL interpreter.

Pension Centres and Jobcentre Plus offices are equipped with audio induction loops, high-powered earphones, radio microphones and text-phones. Training and guidance on deaf and hard of hearing issues are routinely provided for staff. The Pension Service Local Service teams use a portable communication aid to support those people who are hard of hearing.

The Pension Service are working with the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) to ensure that the service achieves the RNID Louder than Words accreditation, which has already been attained by the National Pension Centre.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Oxford, East constituency receive council tax benefit; and how many have received it in each of the last 10 years. [58271]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. Council tax benefit information is not available broken down by parliamentary constituency. A breakdown of the figures by age is not available prior to 2003. The available information for Oxford city council is in the table.

Council tax benefit recipients aged 60 years or over in the Oxford city council area

	Number
August	
2003	4,000
2004	3,600
2005	3,700

Notes:

1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple where either the claimant or partner is aged 60 years or over.

2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

3. Figures exclude any single adult rebate cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken between August 2003 and August 2005.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the maximum level of income is at which council tax benefit is payable for a single earner household with two adults and two children; and if he will make a statement. [59343]

Mr. Plaskitt: There is no prescribed maximum income above which council tax benefit would cease to be payable. The amount of income required to float someone off council tax benefit will depend on the level of council tax for which the household is liable, and the makeup and characteristics of the claimant's household.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many residents in *(a)* Denton and Reddish constituency, *(b)* Tameside metropolitan borough and *(c)* Stockport metropolitan borough are (i) entitled to and (ii) receiving council tax benefit. [57827]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information on council tax benefit is not available broken down by parliamentary constituency.

The latest available information on unclaimed council tax benefit is in "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take Up in 2003–04", a copy of which is in the Library.

As at August 2005, the most recent available figures, there were 20,700 households in the Stockport metropolitan borough council area and 22,000 households in the Tameside metropolitan borough council area in receipt of council tax benefit.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 246W, on housing benefit, what research evidence base his Department is using to determine policy decisions on the non-dependent deduction regime for housing benefit. [57959]

Mr. Plaskitt: The current system of non-dependant deductions has been in place since 1992, with an increase in the number of non-dependant deduction bands from four to six in 1996. The latest research specifically about non-dependant deductions is: "Paying for Rented Housing: Non-Dependant Deductions from Housing Benefit". A copy is available in the Library. The Department has implemented several recommendations made in this report, including improvements to the notification processes and concessions to those aged 65 and over.

Note:

Department of Social Security Research Report no. 43, published in 1996.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the likely average change in amount received for those who receive the replacement for incapacity benefit. [60481]

Mrs. McGuire: The new employment and support allowance will focus on how we can help people into work and will not automatically assume that because a person has a significant health condition or disability they are incapable of work. It will be an integrated, contributory and income-related allowance, replacing current incapacity benefit and income support on the grounds of incapacity. The allowance will provide underlying and targeted financial support for those with needs arising from health problems and disabilities. It will be built on the principle of rights and responsibilities, rewarding those who take steps to realise a return to work where that is reasonable. The new allowance will do much to remove the complexity surrounding existing benefits.

Details of the exact benefit rates of this new allowance have yet to be decided.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the benefit replacing incapacity benefit will be taxable. [60482]

Margaret Hodge: Taxation is a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer and an announcement will be made in due course.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of incapacity benefit were also in receipt of *(a)* housing benefit and *(b)* council tax benefit in the latest period for which figures are available. [59853]

Mr. Plaskitt: As at May 2004, the most recent date for which figures are available, there were 519,000 housing benefit households and 583,000 council tax benefit households in which the claimant or their partner also claimed incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the take-up rate of each category of means-tested benefit was in each year since 1997. [60614]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave my right hon. Friend the Member for North Tyneside (Mr. Byers), on 3 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1034W.

Carer's Allowance

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Bridgend constituency have ceased to receive carer's allowance having reached pensionable age in each of the last five years. [59981]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of carer's allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Bridgend constituency have ceased to receive carers' allowance having reached pensionable age in each of the last five years.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information requested is not available. Such information as is available is in the following table:

State pension claimants in Bridgend parliamentary constituency with underlying entitlement to carer's allowance but not in receipt of carer's allowance

Thousand

	Number
August	
2005	0.1
2004	0.1
2003	0.1
September	
2002	0.1
2001	—

Notes:

1. Definitions and conventions: "—" nil or negligible, "." not applicable; caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and displayed in thousands.
2. Totals show the number of people not in receipt of an allowance and where they are recorded as being in receipt of state pension on the carer's allowance computer system.
3. Parliamentary constituency of claimant (Westminster): These constituencies are used for the Westminster parliament. For the May 2005 general election, the constituencies in Scotland changed. These constituencies are included in the tables from May 2005 onwards. Prior to that, these new constituencies are shown as missing.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

I hope this is helpful.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many carers aged 60 and over in each Welsh parliamentary constituency receive the non-standard rate of carer's allowance, broken down by sex. [60410]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of carer's allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many carers aged 60 and over in each Welsh parliamentary constituency receive the non-standard rate of carer's allowance broken down by sex.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information requested is not available. Such information as is available is in the following table:

Carer's allowance cases in payment by parliamentary constituency as at August 2005 for people aged 60 and over

Thousand

	Number
Wales	3.0
Aberavon	0.1
Alyn and Deeside	0.1
Blaenau Gwent	0.1
Brecon and Radnorshire	0.1
Bridgend	0.1
Caernarfon	—
Caerphilly	0.1
Cardiff, Central	—
Cardiff, North	—
Cardiff, South and Penarth	0.1
Cardiff, West	0.1
Carmarthen, East and Dinefwr	0.1
Carmarthen, West and South Pembrokeshire	0.1
Ceredigion	0.1
Clwyd, South	0.1
Clwyd, West	0.1
Conwy	—
Cynon Valley	0.1
Delyn	—
Gower	0.1
Islwyn	0.1
Llanelli	0.1
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	—
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	0.1
Monmouth	0.1
Montgomeryshire	—
Neath	0.1
Newport, East	0.1
Newport, West	0.1
Ogmore	0.1
Pontypridd	0.1
Preseli Pembrokeshire	0.1
Rhondda	0.1
Swansea, East	0.1
Swansea, West	0.1
Torfaen	0.1
Vale of Clwyd	0.1
Vale of Glamorgan	0.1
Wrexham	0.1
Ynys Mon	0.1

Notes:

1. Definitions and conventions: "—" nil or negligible; "." not applicable; caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and displayed in thousands; Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Caseload (thousands) totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended.
3. Parliamentary constituency of claimant (Westminster) These constituencies are used for the Westminster parliament. For the May 2005 general election, the constituencies in Scotland changed. These constituencies are included in the tables from May 2005 onwards. Prior to that, these new constituencies are shown as missing.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

I hope this is helpful.

Child Poverty

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the level of child poverty in Easington constituency in the last five years. [61133]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Wales, Scotland and the English regions of Great Britain is available in the latest publication of "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2004–05". The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The data source does not allow us to provide robust estimates below regional level and, therefore, estimates for the number of children living in poverty in Easington for the past five years are not available.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of children in Wales were living in poverty in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1997 and *(c)* 2005. [58462]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* Specific information regarding low income for Wales and other regions of Great Britain is available in the latest publication of the 'Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2004–05'. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The specific information requested is not available; however I have provided three-year averages showing the proportions of children in low income households in Wales on both before and after housing costs bases in the following table. Similar figures for the proportions of children living in poverty in 1979 are not available.

Percentage of children living in households with contemporary income less than 60 per cent. of median income: Wales

	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*
1996–97 to 1998–99	28	34
2002–03 to 2004–05	23	28

Source:
Family Resources Survey

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children were living in poverty in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Pembrokeshire in each year since 1997. [58463]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* Specific information regarding low income for Wales and other regions of Great Britain is available in the latest publication of the 'Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2004–05'. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The specific information requested is not available; however I have provided three-year averages showing the numbers of children in relative low income households in Wales on both before and after housing costs bases in the following table. The data source does not allow us to provide robust estimates below regional level so estimates for the numbers of children living in poverty in Pembrokeshire are not available.

Numbers of children (in millions) living in households with relative income less than 60 per cent. of median income since 1997: Wales

Three-year moving averages	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*
1996–97 to 1998–99	0.18	0.23
1997–98 to 1999–2000	0.18	0.23
1998–99 to 2000–01	0.18	0.23
1999–2000 to 2001–02	0.17	0.21
2000–01 to 2002–03	0.16	0.20
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.15	0.19
2002–03 to 2004–05	0.15	0.18

Source:
Family Resources Survey

Child Support Agency

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether consent orders by courts may be *(a)* taken into account and *(b)* over-ridden by the Child Support Agency in assessing non-resident parents for maintenance in a case where a non-resident parent has agreed to pay sums in lieu of maintenance. [59352]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are only limited circumstances in which sums paid to an ex-partner in lieu of ongoing maintenance can be taken into account.

Under the new child support scheme non-resident parents and parents with care may apply for a "variation" to the maintenance calculation. A non-resident parent can apply to have their maintenance reduced to reflect a transfer of property or capital to the parent with care.

This applies where the transfer was valued at £5,000 or more and was made as a result of a court order or written maintenance agreement made prior to 5 April 1993, and the transfer was made in lieu of ongoing child maintenance. These were often referred to as "clean break" settlements. In all other cases transfers of property or capital cannot be reflected in maintenance liabilities.

A variation is allowed only where it is "just and equitable". Broadly this means that the result of the variation must be fair, taking account of all the circumstances of the case, and, in particular, the welfare of any child likely to be affected. This includes the child for whom maintenance is paid as well as any other children living with either parent.

An order for periodical payments of maintenance made, by consent or otherwise, before 3 March 2003 will usually prevent an application for child support maintenance unless the parent with care has claimed a prescribed benefit. Such an order made after that date will prevent an application for a year, again unless the parent with care claims benefit. When a maintenance calculation is made in a case where an order exists, that part of the order which provides for periodical payment of maintenance ceases to have effect.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to ensure that the Child Support Agency (CSA) takes into account previous voluntary payments to former partners in excess of CSA awards when assessing future awards. [60984]

Mr. Plaskitt: In cases assessed under the new scheme, child support liability is based on the non-resident parent's net weekly income and the number of children in their previous and current families.

When a child maintenance application is made there is often a gap between the date the responsibility for maintenance begins and the date the maintenance calculation is completed. Voluntary payments made during this period may be offset against any arrears which exist once maintenance has been calculated. If the total amount of the voluntary payments exceeds any arrears, the amount payable under a current maintenance calculation can be reduced to take account of those voluntary payments but the amount payable cannot be reduced to less than £5 per week.

These voluntary payments can include those made by non-resident parents for child maintenance, to provide for some of the basic needs of their children, or for household bills (such as mortgage repayments or for gas or electricity costs). They may have been made to the person with care or to the Child Support Agency.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the proportion of sickness absence days taken at the Child Support Agency in the last five years that were due to stress and other mental health problems. [30026]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the proportion of sickness absence days taken at the Child Support Agency in the last five years that were due to stress and other mental health problems.

The proportion of total sickness absence days taken at the Child Support Agency that relates broadly to the category you have requested is shown in the table below.

Sick absence—represented as days lost:

Absences broadly due to stress and other mental health problems as a percentage of total sickness absences

	Percentage
January-December 2001	26.8
January-December 2002	28.3
April 2003-March 2004	31.8
April 2004-March 2005	32
April 2005-October 2005	24.7

Figures for January 2003 to March 2003 are unavailable as a change in methodology for collection of sickness data was introduced in April 2003.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the nature is of technical problems affecting the Child Support Agency's new computer system; and if he will make a statement; [58949]

(2) when the technical problems which are affecting the Child Support Agency's new computer system began; [58950]

(3) how many payments to single parents have been delayed due to the technical problems affecting the Child Support Agency's new computer system; and if he will make a statement. [58951]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is currently unavailable as he is communicating the Operational Improvement Plan to all Agency staff. I am responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the nature is of technical problems affecting the Child Support Agency's new computer system; and if he will make a statement.

In addition, you asked how long the technical problems which are affecting the Child Support Agency's new computer system have been continuing.

And finally, you asked how many payments to single parents have been delayed due to the technical problems affecting the Child Support Agency's new computer system; and if he will make a statement.

The following response seeks to address all three questions.

The new child support scheme was introduced on 3 March 2003. It has been well publicised that there has been a number of technical problems with the performance of the new computer system (CS2) from this date. A great deal of work has been carried out to improve the stability of the new computer system (CS2) and operational performance has improved to the point where contracted service levels are now consistently being met.

There are still a number of defects in the CS2 computer system which can prevent some cases from progressing. The clerical process allows staff to progress these cases off-line to ensure that any money paid in by the non-resident parent is paid out to the parent with care.

Where a payment has not been issued by the system a manual payment can be requested. The Agency has a process for manual payments which has reduced delays in issuing such payments to clients. In such circumstances, a hold is placed on the computer system to prevent it from releasing the funds pending recovery and adjustment of the accounts. Further investigation is taking place to ensure that this system is effective.

We have around 3,400 customers who are regularly paid their maintenance manually. This includes a mix of payment frequencies—i.e. weekly, monthly, 2- monthly, 6-monthly etc. I am unable to give a breakdown between computer failure and other reasons for payments having to be made manually.

Work is ongoing to remedy the problems with the new computer system, and future IT releases are planned during 2006 and 2007 to resolve the various system performance issues and build on the improvements already made.

I hope you find this helpful

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of *(a)* the costs in staff time and *(b)* other costs associated with the delayed introduction and faulty performance of the CS2 computer system since its introduction in March 2003. [41716]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 12 January 2006]:* The Work and Pensions Select Committee have also requested this information and the Child Support Agency will be providing a response to them shortly.

Communication Equipment

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to provide a guaranteed right to augmentative and alternative communication equipment for people with communication impairments. [59850]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

Provision of equipment and support is based on assessment of need and not a right to specific items or services. Primary care trusts (PCTs) and local councils receive substantial funding from Government each year. Within those allocations, it is for local PCTs and councils to fund and provide appropriate communication aids for their population through their integrated community equipment services in the light of local needs and priorities.

Contractors

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria he uses to decide whether potential contractors are a bad financial risk. [60583]

Margaret Hodge: Prior to the formal tendering stage of the procurement process, the Department requires potential contractors to complete and submit a detailed 'Pre-Qualification Questionnaire' (PQQ), developed by the Office of Government Commerce, which provides the basis for selecting potential contractors to be invited to tender. The financial information required via the PQQ comprises the last two years' audited accounts, or, where audited accounts are not available, turnover, profit and loss, cash flow details and end-period balance sheet. The PQQ also seeks separate information regarding the turnover which enables us to assess the capacity of the organisation to fulfil the contract.

The PQQ is analysed by procurement and financial experts to determine whether or not the potential contractor is capable of undertaking the required work, and is also financially able to take the work on. This helps to prevent the Department entering into a contract with a financially exposed supplier.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter dated 8 February from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding UK child poverty. [60496]

Margaret Hodge: I replied to the hon. Member on 20 March 2006.

Energy Sector (Industrial Injuries)

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many industrial *(a)* injuries and *(b)* fatalities have occurred in UK (i) coal mines and (ii) oil and gas extraction, refining and storage facilities since 1990. [49227]

Mrs. McGuire: HSE systems record the number of workplace injuries reported in Great Britain under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR 95). These systems do not identify the data to the level of detail requested; the closest available detail is provided. Access to older data at the required level of detail is not readily available and would require the restoration of archived databases.

Across the nine-year period 1996–97 to the provisional year 2004–05:

10,823 industrial injuries in Great Britain were reported to HSE that occurred in the defined industries as follows: For the years 1996–97 to 1999–2000: Coal mines, SIC92 Division 10 'Mining of coal and lignite, extraction of peat'; Oil and gas extraction, SIC92 Division 11 Extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas'; for years 2000–01 and on: Coal mines, SIC 92 codes 10100 'Mining and agglomeration of hard coal', 10101 'Deep coal mines', 10102 'Opencast coal working'; Oil and gas extraction,11100 'Extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas', 11200 'Service activities incidental to oil and gas extraction excluding surveying'; Refining, 23200 'Manufacture of refined petroleum products', 23201 'Mineral oil refining', 23209 'Other treatment of petroleum products (excluding petrochemicals manufacture'; Oil and gas storage, 51510 'Wholesale of solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products', 51511 'Wholesale of petroleum and petroleum products', 51519 'Wholesale of other fuels and related products'.

Of these industrial injuries, 48 fatal injuries were reported. Table 1 provides a yearly breakdown. Table 2 shows a yearly breakdown by fatal, major and over-3-day injury categories reportable under RIDDOR 95.

Table 1: Industrial (a) injuries and (b) fatalities in the industries as defined above reported to HSE in Great Britain in each year since 1996–97

		Industrial, of which:	
Year[1]/Industry	*Employment status*	*(a) injuries*	*(b) fatalities*
1996–97			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	714	4
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	714	4
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	381	2
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	382	2
1997–98			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	1,245	7
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	1,245	7
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	421	3
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	422	3
1998–99			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	1,101	4
	Members of public	2	—
	Total	1,103	4
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	355	1
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	355	1
1999–2000			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	942	1
	Members of public	3	—
	Total	945	1
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	279	2
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	280	2
2000–01			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	918	—
	Members of public	2	—
	Total	920	—

Table 1: Industrial (a) injuries and (b) fatalities in the industries as defined above reported to HSE in Great Britain in each year since 1996–97

		Industrial, of which:	
Year[1]/Industry	*Employment status*	*(a) injuries*	*(b) fatalities*
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	275	3
	Members of public	4	2
	Total	279	5
Refining	Workers	105	—
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	105	—
Oil and gas storage	Workers	112	1
	Members of public	2	—
	Total	114	1
2001–02			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	871	2
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	871	2
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	277	5
	Members of public	2	1
	Total	279	6
Refining	Workers	47	1
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	47	1
Oil and gas storage	Workers	102	—
	Members of public	2	—
	Total	104	—
2002–03			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	667	—
	Members of public	3	1
	Total	670	1
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	230	—
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	231	—
Refining	Workers	37	1
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	37	1
Oil and gas storage	Workers	79	1
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	79	1
2003–04			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	557	2
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	558	2
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	206	3
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	207	3
Refining	Workers	50	—
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	50	—
Oil and gas storage	Workers	91	1
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	91	1
2004–052			
(i) Coal mines	Workers	416	—
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	417	—
(ii) Oil and gas extraction	Workers	204	—
	Members of public	—	—
	Total	204	—
Refining	Workers	29	—
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	30	—
Oil and gas storage	Workers	83	—
	Members of public	1	—
	Total	84	—
Total		10,823	48

[1] Prior to 2000–01 the activities of refining and oil and gas storage could not be separately identified from other activities also included in the top-level industry coding in use at this time.

[2] Provisional.

Table 2: Injuries to workers and members of the public reported to HSE in the industries as defined above, 1996–97 to 2004–05[2]

Year[1]/Employment status	*Fatal injuries*	*Non-fatal major injuries*	*Over-3-day injuries*	*All reported injuries*
1996–97				
Workers	4	200	510	714
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	4	200	510	714
Workers	2	28	351	381
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	2	29	351	382
1997–98				
Workers	7	213	1,025	1,245
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	7	213	1,025	1,245
Workers	3	84	334	421
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	3	85	334	422
1998–99				
Workers	4	134	963	1,101
Members of public	—	2	n/a	2
Total	4	136	963	1,103
Workers	1	79	275	355
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	1	79	275	355
1999–2000				
Workers	1	128	813	942
Members of public	—	3	n/a	3
Total	1	131	813	945
Workers	2	61	216	279
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	2	62	216	280
2000–01				
Workers	—	106	812	918
Members of public	—	2	n/a	2
Total	—	106	812	920
Workers	3	65	207	275
Members of public	2	2	n/a	4
Total	5	65	207	279
Workers	—	34	71	105
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	—	34	71	105
Workers	1	29	82	112
Members of public	—	2	n/a	2
Total	1	29	82	114
2001–02				
Workers	2	106	763	871
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	2	106	763	871
Workers	5	66	206	277
Members of public	1	1	n/a	2
Total	6	66	206	279
Workers	1	8	38	47
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	1	8	38	47
Workers	—	27	75	102
Members of public	—	2	n/a	2
Total	—	27	75	104
2002–03				
Workers	—	81	586	667
Members of public	1	2	n/a	3
Total	1	81	586	670
Workers	—	78	152	230
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	—	78	152	231
Workers	1	9	27	37
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	1	9	27	37
Workers	1	15	63	79
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	1	15	63	79

Table 2: Injuries to workers and members of the public reported to HSE in the industries as defined above, 1996–97 to 2004–05[2]

Year[1]*/Employment status*	*Fatal injuries*	*Non-fatal major injuries*	*Over-3-day injuries*	*All reported injuries*
2003–04				
Workers	2	64	491	557
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	2	64	491	558
Workers	3	59	144	206
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	3	59	144	207
Workers	—	13	37	50
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	—	13	37	50
Workers	1	18	72	91
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	1	18	72	91
2004–05[2]				
Workers	—	76	340	416
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	—	76	340	417
Workers	—	64	140	204
Members of public	—	—	n/a	—
Total	—	64	140	204
Workers	—	10	19	29
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	—	10	19	30
Workers	—	19	64	83
Members of public	—	1	n/a	1
Total	—	19	64	84
Total	48	1,882	8,876	10,823

n/a = not applicable

[1] Prior to 2000–01 the activities of refining and oil and gas storage could not be separately identified from other activities also included in the top-level industry coding in use at this time.

[2] Provisional.

Graveyards

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Health and Safety Executive is taking to ensure safety in graveyards from headstones; and what guidance the Health and Safety Executive has issued to burial authorities about the safety of headstones. [56390]

Mrs. McGuire: On this issue, HSE supports the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), who have overall responsibility for burial law, to ensure that the safety of headstones is taken into account as part of the overall management of cemeteries. In 2004, the Chairman of the Health and Safety Commission wrote to all Local Authority Chief Executives, setting out the need for a sensitive and proportionate approach to headstone safety. HSE is now assisting the DCA in preparing advice, which, following consultation, they plan to publish later this year.

Hazardous Cargoes

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is taking in conjunction with *(a)* the Health and Safety Executive and *(b)* (i) local and (ii) maritime authorities to improve safety in the handling of hazardous cargoes at ports and terminals. [45889]

Mrs. McGuire: Safety standards in the transport and handling of hazardous cargoes at ports and terminals are improved and maintained through an inspection and enforcement regime operated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Statutory Harbour Authorities, which considers the type of cargo handled and any specific risks associated with the cargo.

Specifically, this is achieved through the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1999 and planning requirements (the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992). All establishments wishing to hold certain hazardous substances above a threshold quantity (the threshold for LNG for example is 15 tonnes) must apply to the Hazardous Substances Authority for a hazardous substances consent. HSE is a statutory consultee under the regulations and carries out risk assessments to enable it to advise on the health and safety risks.

The assessments which are carried out in relation to Consents consider the risks to people in the vicinity of a major hazards establishment. The assessments are rigorous and detailed taking in all aspect within HSE's remit.

COMAH is the principal legislation dealing with the operation of major hazard establishments. COMAH applies to specified quantities and types of substances. The aim of the regulation is to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and limit the consequences of any incidents to people and the environment.

COMAH requirements are necessarily robust, the requirements are proportionate to the hazards and risks but the sites with the highest quantities of major hazards substances are subject to a safety report regime which requires a demonstration that all measures necessary have been taken to prevent major accidents and to limit the consequences to people and the environment of any that do occur.

Both the COMAH requirements and the criteria for carrying out assessments in relation to consents are updated and improved in the light of advances in technology and experience. This is an ongoing process.

Household Income

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to what extent differences between poverty levels are recorded on a *(a)* before and *(b)* after housing costs basis attributable to the use of different equivalisation scales. [56040]

Margaret Hodge: Households Below Average Income (HBAI): 1994–95 to 2004–05 was published on 9 March 2006 and is available in the Library.

Results in the publication for both Before and After Housing Costs use the same equivalisation scale. Equalisation is a formula applied to household income to enable the comparison of households of different sizes and composition. The main results reported in the latest edition of HBAI were equivalised using the McClements equivalence scale.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the figures used to produce the income distribution curves on page 11 of the most recent edition of Households Below Average Income are publicly available. [56042]

Margaret Hodge: The data used to produce the distribution curves on pages 10 and 11 of the 1994–95—2004–05 edition of Households Below Average Income has been placed in the Library.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the location of each Jobcentre Plus telephone call centre. [59846]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie dated 27 March 2006:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking for a list of the locations of each Jobcentre Plus telephone call centre in the UK. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus contact centre operations comprise Jobcentre Plus Direct, Employer Direct and the National Benefit Fraud Hotline.

Jobcentre Plus Direct is a national contact centre network helping customers enquire about jobs through Jobseeker Direct, or to make a claim for benefit—referred to as First Contact.

Employer Direct provides a single national telephone number for employers to place vacancies. It provides 24-hour electronic access by email and fax. The sites form a virtual network

National Benefit Fraud Hotline is available to encourage the public to help in the fight against benefit fraud and abuse by providing a free, convenient and confidential service for people who wish to report cases of suspected benefit fraud.

These services are delivered from sites across the UK. Details of the location of the contact centre sites are in the table.

Jobcentre Plus	*Bangor (from May 2006)*
Jobcentre Plus Direct	Blackburn
	Bootle
	Bridgend
	Coventry
	Derby
	Dundee
	Garston
	Grimsby
	Halifax
	Harrow
	Hastings
	Lincoln
	Lowestoft
	Marston Mere
	Middlesborough
	Newcastle
	Paisley
	Pembroke Dock
	Poole
	Sheffield
	Taunton
	Telford
	Torquay
Employer Direct	Annesley
	Clydebank
	Caerphilly
	Exeter
	Grimsby
	Liverpool
	Peterlee
	Southend
	Telford
National Benefit Fraud Hotline	Preston

I hope this is helpful.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people he estimates Jobcentre Plus has helped into work in *(a)* the Banbury and *(b)* the Oxford travel-to-work area in the last 12 months; and how many were over 50 in each case. [60028]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question asking how many people he estimates Jobcentre Plus has helped into work in *(a)* the Banbury and *(b)* the Oxford travel-to-work area in the last 12 months and how many were over-50 in each case. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The number of vacancies filled through Jobcentre Plus in the 12 months to February 2006 is shown in the table below. Figures for those aged over 50 are not available.

Travel to work area	*Number of filled vacancies*
Banbury	4,750
Oxford	18,000

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Labour Market System

Jobcentre Plus handles only a proportion of vacancies notified by employers. Consequently the figures do not represent the total number of vacancies filled in Banbury or Oxford Travel to Work Areas.

I hope this is helpful.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) which Jobcentre Plus call centres are available to job seekers in Oxfordshire; and for what hours each call centre operates; [60056]

(2) how many calls to Jobcentre Plus call centres serving Oxfordshire were necessary on average for a jobseeker to get through to a member of staff in the last period for which figures are available. [60081]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions asking which Jobcentre Plus call centres are available to jobseekers in Oxfordshire and for what hours each call centre operates, and how many calls to Jobcentre Plus call centres serving Oxfordshire were necessary on average for a jobseeker to get through to a member of staff in the last period for which figures are available. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobseeker Direct is a telephone job matching service for customers who are job ready and looking for work. Customers can contact Jobseeker Direct by ringing a local rate 0845 number. We have a number of contact centre sites located through out the UK that deliver the Jobseeker Direct Service. None are located in Oxfordshire. When a customer calls the dedicated 0845 number, the next available advisor within the network, regardless of the call's geographic origin, will answer their call. This service is available from 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 1.00pm on Saturdays.

Jobseeker Direct is a national service and it is not possible to identify the number of calls received from the Oxfordshire area. However, I can tell you that for the three months to the end of February Jobseeker Direct answered over 2.2 million calls which represents 97% of all calls received (against our target of 90%). Jobseeker Direct also exceeded our target of 80% of calls answered within 20 seconds, for that period.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the establishment of the Stroud Jobcentre Plus office is; and what the combined establishment of his Department's Stroud office and the Jobcentre Plus office in Stroud was on 31 March 2004. [59051]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what the current establishment of Stroud Jobcentre Plus office is and what the combined establishment of the Department's Stroud office and Jobcentre Plus office in Stroud was on 31 March 2004. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I am unable to answer your specific question, as we no longer hold the information you have requested for March 2004. I have quoted the earliest figures held which are for October 2004.

In October 2004 the full-time equivalent staffing allocation for Stroud Jobcentre (which included an element for Dursley) was 17.23. The allocation for Stroud Social Security Office was 44.71. There were also 34.37 staff working on across the district functions including bereavement benefit, national insurance number applications, maternity allowance, appeals work, Social Fund and visiting staff. In total the allocation for Stroud was 96.31 full-time equivalent staff.

The current full-time equivalent allocation for Stroud Jobcentre Plus is 27.20. The work currently being undertaken at the Stroud office is significantly different from that undertaken in 2004. The old Jobcentre has closed and the Social Security office has been refurbished and converted into a Jobcentre Plus office. New systems have been introduced and new claims for benefit are now taken over the telephone by the contact centre in Torquay, with the majority of benefit processing work taking place in Gloucester and Cheltenham. District-wide functions have also been housed elsewhere.

I hope this is helpful.

Lone Parents

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of lone parents in West Lancashire moved from income support to *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance, *(c)* other out-of-work benefits and *(d)* employment when their youngest child reached 16 years old in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [58434]

(2) what proportion of lone parents in Coventry South have moved from income support to *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* jobseeker's allowance since 1997. [58909]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Due to the very small numbers of claimants involved it is not possible to estimate accurately the information below national level.

For the available national figures, I refer my hon. Friend to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 16 March 2006, *Official Report,* columns 2458W-59W.

Mental Health

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to support people with mental health problems in finding employment. [58910]

Margaret Hodge: Our Welfare Reform Green Paper sets out proposals that will build on the success of Pathways to Work. To ensure our reforms are successful and that we deliver the best services possible, we are working with customers and their representatives, employers and medical professionals to increase awareness of the needs of all groups, including those with mental health conditions. We know that nearly four out of 10 people who claim incapacity benefit have a mental health condition and the longer people remain on the benefit; the more likely they are to develop mental health conditions.

One of the key principles of Pathways to Work is inclusion and support for all, and it is important that claimants attend and participate in their scheduled work-focused interviews to maintain contact and take advantage of the support that is on offer. Everyone who wants to work, whatever their health condition or disability, should get the appropriate help and support to enable them to work as soon as they are able to do so. With that support the prospects for the majority of people are good. To provide this advice and support we have invested heavily in training for personal advisers and in condition management programmes in Pathways to Work areas.

We intend to develop our work with health service providers to meet the particular needs of those with mental health conditions, many of whom are likely to require ongoing support, whether they return to work or remain in receipt of benefits.

National Insurance Numbers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average waiting time is for an overseas national to obtain a national insurance number *(a)* in-country and *(b)* from abroad. [58522]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. The average clearance time for national insurance number applications in Great Britain between April 2005 and February 2006 is 20 days. national insurance numbers can only be applied for by persons resident in the UK.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many national insurance numbers have been issued to overseas nationals resident in each local authority in the south-west in each of the last four years; [58523]

(2) how many overseas nationals resident in each local authority in Gloucestershire obtained national insurance numbers in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by country of origin; [58524]

(3) how many overseas nationals in each local authority in the south-west were refused a national insurance number in the last year for which figures are available. [58537]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. The information is not available broken down by country of origin, nor is it available broken down below regional level.

National Pensions Day

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of staging each of the National Pensions Day events held on 18 March. [61165]

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost was to the Government of the Pensions Day events and activities on 18 March, including his Department's website survey. [61412]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested.

Opinion Leader Research is contracted to this Department to deliver the National Pensions Day events, the regional events, the website survey, the stakeholder toolkit and analysis of all of the National Pensions Debate feedback. This work is not yet concluded.

The total costs invoiced to date are £794,130. The total cost is expected to be just under £1 million.

New Deal for Lone Parents

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average *(a)* duration and *(b)* cost was of a work-focused interview under the New Deal for Lone Parents in the latest period for which figures are available. [57290]

Margaret Hodge: On average, an adviser spends up to an hour on a lone parent work-focused interview. This time covers any preparatory work connected to the interview such as the in work benefit calculation as well as the interview itself. The average cost of a lone parent work-focused interview is currently £34.

Office Equipment

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the annual expenditure on *(a)* fixtures and fittings, *(b)* general office expenses and *(c)* office equipment was of his (i) Department and (ii) each (A) non-departmental public body, (B) executive agency and (C) other public body for which his Department is responsible in (1) Scotland, (2) Wales, (3) each English region and (4) Northern Ireland in each of the last three financial years; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06 in each case. [40090]

Mrs. McGuire: A full response is not available from standard information system in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. A partial response can be provided using the closest categories used by the department to those requested.

The Department's estate has been sold under a PFI partnership deal to Land Securities Trillium and payments are as a whole for fully serviced accommodation facilities. A breakdown in the format requested could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

With regard to each non-departmental public body, those listed operate separate accounting systems.

		£
Remploy Ltd		
2002–03	*(a)* fixtures and fittings and *(c)* Office Equipment	1,494,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	2,538,000
2003–04	*(a)* fixtures and fittings *(c)* Office Equipment	1,429,000
	(b) General Office Expenses:	2,461,000
2004–05	*(a)* fixtures and fittings and *(c)* Office Equipment	2,148,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	2,084,000
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings and *(c)* Office Equipment	1,368,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	1,614,000
Independent Living Funds (ILF)		
2002–03	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	49,040
	(c) Office Equipment	2,737
2003–04	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	36,194
	(c) Office Equipment	33,076
2004–05	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	47,520
	(c) Office Equipment	1,597
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	50,220
	(c) Office Equipment	10,000
Disability Rights Commission (DRC)		
2002–03	*(a)* fixtures and fittings (Breakdown = S:£31,986, W:£6,645, L:£966, NW:£10,978)	50,575
	(b) General Office Expenses	2,054,000
	(c) Office Equipment	21,000
2003–04	*(a)* fixtures and fittings (Breakdown = S:£2,882, NW:£27,257)	30,139
	(b) General Office Expenses	1,521,000
	(c) Office Equipment	19,000

		£
2004–05	*(a)* fixtures and fittings (Breakdown = S:£15,236, NW:£45,936)	61,172
	(b) General Office Expenses	1,718,000
	(c) Office Equipment	22,000
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings (Breakdown = S:£8,432, NW:£62,793)	71,225
	(b) General Office Expenses	1,555,002
	(c) Office Equipment	22,000
Pension Protection Fund (PPF) Established 6 April 2005		
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	170,000
	(c) Office Equipment	0
Pensions Ombudsman (PO)		
2002–03	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	[1]n/a
	(b) General Office Expenses	12,300
	(c) Office Equipment	0
2003–04	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	[1]n/a
	(b) General Office Expenses	9,000
	(c) Office Equipment	0
2004–05	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	[1]n/a
	(b) General Office Expenses	8,400
	(c) Office Equipment	2,400
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	[1]n/a
	(b) General Office Expenses	9,500
	(c) Office Equipment	20,000
The Pensions Regulator (TPR) Established 6 April 2005		
Plan for 2005–06	Breakdown between fixtures and fittings, General Office Expenses and Office Equipment: not available.	2,219,000

n/a = Not available.

[1] Likely to be small.

Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, The Child Support Agency, The Disability and Carers Service and The Appeals Service are all included within the Department's contract with Land Securities Trillium. Details below relate to those agencies which are not covered by the contract with Land Securities Trillium.

		£
The Rent Service only became part of DWP in April 2004		
2004–05	*(a)* Fixtures and Fittings	592,311
	(b) General Office Expenses	1,926,650
	(c) Office Equipment	22, 394
2005–06	*(a)* Fixtures and Fittings	337,738
	(b) General Office Expenses	1,678,259
	(c) Office Equipment	17,471
Health and Safety Executive[1]		
2002–03	*(a)* Fixtures and Fittings	2,003,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	74,195,000
	(c) Office Equipment	508,000
2003–04	*(a)* Fixtures and Fittings	654,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	74,910,000
	(c) Office Equipment	557,000
2004–05	*(a)* Fixtures and Fittings	3,403,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	88,346,000
	(c) Office Equipment	529,000
2005–06	*(a)* Fixtures and Fittings	986,000
	(b) General Office Expenses	94,133,000
	(c) Office Equipment	508,000

[1] The figures show the total position for HSE (including the Health & Safety Laboratory which is an agency of HSE). This information is not held in a national/regionalised [illegible]. The figures for Fixtures and fittings and Office equipm[illegible] only to capital expenditure, Office equipment inclu[illegible] IT. General office expenses figures includes all genera[illegible]ative expenditure (GAE) eg: communications, IT serv[illegible]ancy, office consumables, miscellaneous staff costs, u[illegible], rates facilities management etc.

Other public body for which his Department is responsible.

		£
Motability		
2002–03	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	44,490
	(b) General Office Expenses	235,475
	(c) Office Equipment	42,775
2003–04	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	40,381
	(b) General Office Expenses	198,789
	(c) Office Equipment	41,232
2004–05	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	83,042
	(b) General Office Expenses	158,491
	(c) Office Equipment	54,061
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	76,137
	(b) General Office Expenses	180,675
	(c) Office Equipment	56,559
The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)		
2002–03	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	1,292
	(b) General Office Expenses	72,127
	(c) Office Equipment	12,235
2003–04	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	88,930
	(c) Office Equipment	24,836
2004–05	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	92,139
	(c) Office Equipment	14,292
Plan for 2005–06	*(a)* fixtures and fittings	0
	(b) General Office Expenses	111,000
	(c) Office Equipment	200

Public Relations Companies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the public relations companies that have had contracts with *(a)* his Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and

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(ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and *(c)* independent statutory bodies, organisations and bodies financially sponsored by his Department and other such organisations since May 1997. [39078]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment including the Employment Service. The information provided relates to this date onwards.

The Department has had a mixture of framework agreements, in which pre-qualified groups of suppliers compete for contractual assignments as they arise as well as fully specified contracts awarded to individual suppliers at the outset.

The information available is as follows and is shown separately for framework agreement contracts and specific PR contracts for the Department and its agencies.

The following companies have had framework agreement with the Department or its agencies. Our systems do not allow us to show separately the information for individual departmental agencies from the departmental information.

Geronimo
Hill & Knowlton
The Foster Company
Trimedia Communications UK Ltd.
Fishburn Hedges
August One
Harrison Cowley
Porter Novelli
Citigate
Consolidated Communications
Euro RSCG Biss
Munroe & Foster
QBO Bell Pottinger
COI
Band and Brown.

The following have had specific PR contracts:

Geronimo
The Forster Company
Citigate Communications
Band and Brown
Fishburn Hedges
Beattie Communications
Pergoda
GCI (UK).

Non-departmental public bodies for which the Department is responsible:

Health and Safety Executive
GCI (UK)
AS Biss & Co.
Disability Rights Commission
Exposure
Eloqui
PR21
Furner Communications.

Independent statutory bodies organisations and bodies financially sponsored by this Department and other such organisations:

Pension Protection Fund
Fishburn Hedges
The Pensions Regulator
Fishburn Hedges
Hill & Knowlton
Citigate Dewe Rogerson
Remploy
Martin Adeney Associates
David Felton Media Consultancy
Warwick Emanuel
Compro PR
Impact Press and PR
Harris Associates
Nexus.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice he has issued to his Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54189]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions will be flying the Union flag on its buildings in recognition of the Queen's birthday, wherever those buildings have flag poles. The Department is not planning any other specific events in relation to Her Majesty's birthday.

Tribunals System

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has held with the Department for Constitutional Affairs on the effective use of the tribunals system. [59050]

Mrs. McGuire: My officials have been working closely with the Department for Constitutional Affairs on all aspects, including the effective use of the tribunal system, in preparation for the transfer of the Appeals Service to that Department in April.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Abu Hamza

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials had with the Crown Prosecution Service regarding the prosecution of Abu Hamza. [53772]

Fiona Mactaggart: The process of bringing a prosecution is a matter for the Crown Prosecution Service in conjunction with the police, and as such, neither I nor my officials had discussions with the CPS concerning the prosecution of Abu Hamza beyond occasional general requests for information, such as dates of hearings.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many officials have visited the Democratic Republic of Congo to assess the safety of returned asylum seekers in the last 12 months. [22467]

Mr. McNulty: No Home Office officials have visited the Democratic Republic of Congo in the last 12 months. However, in addition to the permanent staff attached to the British embassy in Kinshasa, officials from several Ministries regularly visit the DRC.

Cash Handling Centres

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps were taken to review security arrangements at major cash handling centres in England and Wales since 20 December 2004. [58500]

Hazel Blears: Local police forces offer security advice as part of their crime prevention agenda to any business or householder who requests it. Additionally, if intelligence is received that a threat exists then appropriate action will be taken.

Children in Custody

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006 to question 47527, on children in custody, how many young persons held in prison establishments were held in adult prisons in each of the last three years. [60436]

Fiona Mactaggart: On 30 June 2003 there were eight persons aged under 18 held in adult prisons; on 30 June 2004 five such persons were held in adult prisons; and on 30 June 2005 two such persons were held in adult prisons. All of these persons were female and held in female prisons, in accommodation specially set aside for juveniles on young offender wings. Under-17-year-old girls are no longer placed within the Prison Service estate, unless exceptional circumstances apply in an individual case, and four dedicated units, within the Prison Service estate, have now been created for 17-year-old girls; a fifth is due to open later this year.

Citizens' Arrests

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what circumstances a citizen may make an arrest; what legislation governs the right of a citizen to make an arrest; what his Department's policy is on the rights of citizens in England and Wales to make an arrest; and if he will make a statement. [60849]

Hazel Blears: Section 24A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, as inserted by Section 110 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, provides that a person other than a constable may arrest in relation to an indictable offence in those situations where it is necessary to *(a)* prevent harm or injury, *(b)* loss or damage to property or *(c)* the person making off before a constable can assume responsibility. Additionally, the person must be satisfied that it is not reasonably practical for a constable to make the arrest instead. There are no current plans to make further amendment to these powers.

Community Support Officers

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers there are in Shropshire; and how many are dedicated to patrolling rural areas. [59327]

Hazel Blears: The Shropshire Basic Command Unit (BCU) had 14 Community Support Officers (CSOs) on 30 June 2005. Deployment of CSOs is an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

Complaints Agreement (MOD Police and Guarding Agency)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the Agreement between the Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency and the Independent Police Complaints Commission under the Independent Police Complaints Commission (Forces Maintained otherwise than by Police Authorities) Order 2004; when that Agreement came into force; and if he will make a statement. [59880]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Agreement between the Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency and the Independent Police Complaints Commission, under the Independent Police Complaints Commission (Forces Maintained otherwise than by Police Authorities) Order 2004 has not been finalised.

Once it has been finalised, a copy will be placed in the Library.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 23 January 2006 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding the free passport criteria. [60494]

Andy Burnham: The Chief Executive of the Passport Service wrote to the hon. Gentleman on 20 March 2006.

Criminal Justice System

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an integrated technology system based upon a common language and common electronic case files has been introduced to the criminal justice system. [16467]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Justice System (CJS) Information Technology (CJS IT) Programme was set up in spring 2002, in response to the "Justice for All" Government White Paper, with the following vision:

> "By 31 March 2008, anyone involved in the CJS—users of it or people working within it—should have access from any browser enabled device, to a seamless, coherent set of computer systems and information to cover the breadth of their dealings".

Considerable progress has been made in achieving this, with 100 per cent. of the underlying server hardware, computers and desktop applications is now in place across the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Magistrates' and Crown courts, prisons and probation. The CPS completed deployment of its case management system in 2003 and the case management systems for the police and Magistrates' Courts are expected to be substantially complete by March 2007. Key to achieving this joined-up vision is the CJS Exchange, which is part of the CJS IT Programme.

This will transport data between the various case management systems, transforming data as required. The CJS Exchange has been designed to cope with all languages. Already, the CJS Exchange is making the exchange of case file data between the police and the CPS possible in Humberside and a further link will enter full live operation in Avon and Somerset in March 2006.

The CJS Exchange is also providing a secure website that, by the end of March, will give all appropriate staff within a Crown Court's catchment area access to hearing information that was previously only available within the courthouse itself. In early March, connectivity between the probation service and prison services offender assessment systems across all 42 areas was completed; currently there are over 810,000 completed assessments on the probation system and over 62,000 completed assessments on the prison system.

If deployments go to plan, initial indications are that, by March 2007, 70 percent. of the CJS areas are expected to have connected their case management systems to the CJS Exchange.

The CJS Exchange is also to be used for the National Enforcement Service's pathfinder pilot in the North of England.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has he made of the Criminal Justice System Exchange live connections scheme; and if he will make a statement. [32786]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Justice System (CJS) Exchange programme has been reviewed by the Group Investment Board four times, most recently in June 2005. The Home Office Group Investment Board, a sub-committee of the Home Office Group Executive Board, is responsible for approving and monitoring all major projects across the Home Office. The CJS Exchange programme has been given the required approval at all reviews.

It was also agreed that CJS Exchange should report annually to the Group Investment Board after each Gateway 0 review; the next appearance before the GIB is scheduled for May 2006. The CJS Exchange programme is also subject to a monthly review of progress by the Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, and a further report is made to the Office of Government Commerce, as this programme has been identified as one of the Home Office key programmes. Expenditure and deliverables for the CJS Exchange programme is agreed as part of the CJS IT programme, which is approved annually by the Home Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, the Attorney-General, the Minister with responsibility for the CJS and the Director General of Criminal Justice IT.

Already, the CJS Exchange is making the exchange of case file data between the police and the CPS possible in Humberside and a further link will enter full live operation in Avon and Somerset in March 2006. The CJS Exchange is also providing a secure website that, by the end of March, will give all appropriate staff within a Crown Court's catchment area access to hearing information that was previously only available within the courthouse itself.

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The CJS Exchange is also to be used for the National Enforcement Service's pathfinder pilot in the North of England.

Criminal Records Checks

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is introducing a limit on the number of registered bodies which may make CRB checks. [60777]

Andy Burnham: The intention is to create a more compact Registered Body network, working in greater partnership with the CRB and composed of high-volume users. This will allow the CRB to focus its resources more effectively to improve compliance and support the evolving role of Registered Bodies. It will also give the CRB the ability to deregister those Registered Bodies that repeatedly fail to adhere to regulations. Overall, the reduction will enhance efficiency and improve standards within the Registered Body network, through the introduction of an annual threshold of applications per Registered Body. This is a key part of the CRB's strategy. The CRB is committed to ensuring that organisations wishing to access the CRB's service can continue to do so. Those that are selected for deregistration will not be deregistered until alternative access arrangements have been found.

Critical Infrastructure Protection

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the Government's response to the EU paper on critical infrastructure protection. [58666]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Copies of the Government's response to the European Commission's Green Paper on "Protection of Critical Infrastructure" have today been placed in the Library.

Public Order

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests have been made following the protests outside the Danish Embassy in London on 4 February. [59961]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of the Metropolitan police tells me that, on 15 March, five men were arrested in connection with offences believed to have been committed during a demonstration in central London on 3 February 2006. Three have been charged and two have been bailed pending further investigations.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60337]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office is committed to achieving the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate energy targets; namely to reduce absolute carbon, from fuel and electricity used in buildings on our estate, by 12.5 per cent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000 and to increase the energy efficiency of the buildings on our estate, measured in terms of kWh of fuel and electricity use per square metre of buildings floor area by 15 per cent. over the same period.

In order to meet these targets the Department is benchmarking key office sites, after which we propose to undertake energy surveys at those sites above the benchmark, and thereafter, will compile site-specific action plans. We will also incorporate energy management clauses within future contracts and include energy performance among the criteria for future site selection. The contract for the management of the new headquarters site at two Marsham Street requires our PFI partner to operate the building at 10 per cent. below the best practice benchmark contained in the Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme Energy Use in Offices Guide.

The public sector Prison Service has an Energy Efficiency Action Plan. A benchmarking guide has been developed and the data used to help set carbon dioxide key performance indicators for each prison. The Prison Service was the first Government Department/Agency to be accredited under the National Energy Foundation's scheme for energy efficiency and was re-accredited in 2003. It aims for reaccreditation every three years, which requires evidence of continuous progress.

Home Detention Curfews

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released from each prison on home detention curfew in each of the last 12 months, for which figures are available. [59308]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the number of prisoners released from prison establishments in England and Wales on home detention curfew (HDC), by prison establishment, January to December 2005, is in the following table.

Prisoners released on home detention curfew between January and December 2005, by prison establishment and region

	2005					
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*
All establishments	1,337	1,337	1,615	1,492	1,517	1,421
Acklington	4	9	5	6	7	6
Albany	0	0	0	0	0	0
Altcourse	20	9	23	30	18	19
Ashfield	1	0	0	0	0	2
Ashwell	13	12	15	9	12	9
Askham Grange	6	3	6	4	8	11
Aylesbury	2	2	0	0	1	1
Bedford	14	13	10	14	20	15
Belmarsh	4	1	2	16	10	1
Birmingham	41	34	46	37	43	40
Blakenhurst	14	19	28	23	30	33
Blantyre House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blundeston	1	0	1	3	4	2
Brinsford	2	8	10	9	7	4
Bristol	2	3	6	2	5	7
Brixton	4	2	1	3	2	3
Brockhill	1	4	2	4	4	4
Bronzefield	7	7	4	8	2	5
Buckley Hall	16	15	25	16	26	24
Bullingdon	13	17	19	27	29	23
Bullwood Hall	2	6	4	4	7	8
Camp Hill	4	5	5	5	5	4
Canterbury	17	10	18	15	14	13
Cardiff	16	10	27	9	9	23
Castington	5	2	2	5	1	1
Channings Wood	3	6	8	9	7	3
Chelmsford	2	3	3	4	1	0
Coldingley	2	0	0	2	3	3
Cookham Wood	5	7	3	9	10	8
Dartmoor	6	2	5	4	7	7
Deerbolt	12	9	16	13	19	10
Doncaster	25	25	33	24	17	35
Dorchester	5	4	1	6	2	2
Dovegate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dover	0	0	0	0	0	0
Downview	12	12	9	10	8	8

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Prisoners released on home detention curfew between January and December 2005, by prison establishment and region

	2005					
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*
Drake Hall	8	11	17	16	12	13
Durham	0	0	0	0	0	0
Durham	11	15	28	22	20	15
East Sutton Park	2	1	3	3	1	2
Eastwood Park	9	11	12	10	15	10
Edmunds Hill	0	4	19	12	11	7
Elmley	12	10	7	7	5	5
Erlestoke	4	7	9	8	12	4
Everthorpe	6	4	7	7	7	5
Exeter	6	7	10	7	8	16
Featherstone	7	9	7	9	8	15
Feltham	1	0	1	3	1	2
Ford	36	48	42	43	52	48
Forest Bank	9	10	12	12	15	4
Foston Hall	9	8	6	6	4	6
Frankland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full Sutton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Garth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gartree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Glen Parva	28	24	41	38	34	18
Gloucester	5	4	3	3	7	2
Grendon	14	19	27	13	18	22
Guys Marsh	9	17	12	12	26	21
Haslar	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatfield/Moorland open	23	35	32	37	25	21
Haverigg	7	5	8	8	15	5
Hewell Grange	23	20	25	23	18	18
Highdown	6	13	12	7	8	14
Highpoint	17	12	15	11	6	9
Hindley	7	1	4	3	2	2
Hollesley Bay	17	16	27	13	23	30
Holloway	7	9	10	13	21	10
Holme House	7	6	7	5	8	19
Hull	18	10	15	10	8	8
Huntercombe	0	2	3	4	4	0
Kingston	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kirkham	65	52	73	57	76	51
Kirklevington	2	3	3	1	3	2
Lancaster	3	7	5	5	3	3
Lancaster Farms	10	18	11	9	17	5
Latchmere House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds	32	19	29	27	19	24
Leicester	5	5	1	3	3	5
Lewes	1	3	7	6	4	4
Leyhill	21	14	22	27	24	22
Lincoln	7	9	5	15	4	4
Lindholme	11	11	15	15	20	17
Littlehey	4	2	3	3	1	3
Liverpool	24	26	18	24	15	26
Long Lartin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low Newton	21	7	14	13	12	5
Lowdham Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maidstone	0	0	0	1	0	0
Manchester	13	13	14	14	11	18
Moorland	6	7	16	10	11	11
Morton Hall	7	8	5	9	3	5
New Hall	13	7	18	23	18	18
North Sea Camp	40	28	44	43	31	28
Northallerton	21	20	38	27	37	32
Norwich	13	12	9	18	11	8
Nottingham	4	1	2	9	1	1
Onley	30	34	28	28	25	30
Parc	21	16	12	27	15	21
Parkhurst	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pentonville	20	24	15	16	9	20
Peterborough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portland	20	15	18	8	9	11
Preston	4	10	2	4	2	6
Ranby	21	19	27	19	25	26
Reading	12	8	6	3	9	8
Risley	7	11	14	10	8	6

Prisoners released on home detention curfew between January and December 2005, by prison establishment and region

	2005					
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*
Rochester	13	9	20	11	13	15
Rye Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0
Send	6	8	4	4	9	3
Shepton Mallet	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shrewsbury	9	7	10	8	9	4
Stafford	4	1	5	7	2	6
Standford Hill	30	39	46	34	44	35
Stocken	5	8	2	7	12	2
Stoke Heath	6	15	9	10	11	18
Styal	13	12	11	14	11	10
Sudbury	13	25	30	33	38	31
Swaleside	0	0	0	0	1	0
Swansea	5	11	14	7	7	9
Swinfen Hall	0	0	0	0	1	2
The Mount	12	10	14	11	7	0
The Wolds	1	0	2	6	4	3
Thorn Cross	31	28	22	22	32	29
Usk	18	17	23	15	21	11
Verne	0	3	2	1	5	3
Wakefield	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wandsworth	4	6	14	5	11	4
Warren Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayland	2	5	8	1	2	5
Wealstun	28	32	31	26	27	31
Weare	16	26	30	30	25	21
Wellingborough	7	7	8	8	6	7
Werrington	0	0	0	0	2	0
Wetherby	1	1	0	2	3	1
Whatton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitemoor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Winchester	27	30	36	23	27	21
Woodhill	13	9	7	4	6	19
Wormwood Scrubs	19	19	29	28	18	15
Wymott	7	3	6	6	5	11

	2005					
	July	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*
All establishments	1,434	1,452	1,480	1,338	1,450	1,473
Acklington	10	6	11	7	16	5
Albany	0	0	0	0	0	0
Altcourse	19	36	42	19	21	16
Ashfield	1	0	0	1	0	1
Ashwell	8	14	12	9	13	8
Askham Grange	4	4	4	6	6	7
Aylesbury	1	3	0	0	1	1
Bedford	18	15	17	17	16	13
Belmarsh	13	9	10	6	5	15
Birmingham	28	13	24	31	29	34
Blakenhurst	28	19	28	24	24	31
Blantyre House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blundeston	2	3	2	4	1	5
Brinsford	6	4	2	4	0	1
Bristol	5	2	5	1	4	2
Brixton	8	5	6	2	5	14
Brockhill	4	4	4	3	1	0
Bronzefield	4	6	5	5	2	3
Buckley Hall	34	22	28	16	4	0
Bullingdon	19	27	27	22	23	28
Bullwood Hall	1	6	8	2	3	5
Camp Hill	6	6	4	4	4	6
Canterbury	9	19	10	14	20	11
Cardiff	22	14	15	13	13	14
Castington	3	0	3	0	2	2
Channings Wood	12	9	10	8	13	7
Chelmsford	2	1	4	4	6	5
Coldingley	1	1	4	2	4	0
Cookham Wood	12	8	7	9	11	8
Dartmoor	7	3	3	5	4	4

	2005					
	July	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*
Deerbolt	13	20	14	11	8	12
Doncaster	26	26	28	21	24	27
Dorchester	7	4	3	3	6	4
Dovegate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dover	0	0	0	0	0	0
Downview	3	6	1	2	7	8
Drake Hall	12	15	17	9	10	16
Durham	19	14	9	19	25	17
Durham	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Sutton Park	2	0	0	2	0	1
Eastwood Park	13	9	15	12	9	21
Edmunds Hill	9	11	21	14	21	22
Elmley	1	3	6	4	6	8
Erlestoke	7	4	3	6	5	3
Everthorpe	14	5	6	15	12	29
Exeter	11	14	19	15	11	12
Featherstone	11	14	8	13	12	13
Feltham	1	1	2	0	0	3
Ford	43	55	55	40	49	60
Forest Bank	11	10	10	15	21	13
Foston Hall	9	9	3	4	6	10
Frankland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full Sutton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Garth	0	0	0	0	1	1
Gartree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Glen Parva	31	23	30	31	23	35
Gloucester	2	5	5	4	1	3
Grendon	19	15	15	20	25	16
Guys Marsh	15	16	16	10	23	10
Haslar	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatfield/Moorland open	21	26	23	29	20	23
Haverigg	8	10	9	10	6	11
Hewell Grange	8	14	10	6	15	11
Highdown	13	13	9	10	15	16
Highpoint	3	12	10	15	17	14
Hindley	2	1	3	1	3	0
Hollesley Bay	29	28	25	18	33	13
Holloway	17	12	5	11	14	14
Holme House	14	18	12	9	11	21
Hull	7	5	9	7	6	9
Huntercombe	4	1	3	3	2	4
Kingston	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kirkham	74	66	55	63	66	63
Kirklevington	2	5	2	3	0	0
Lancaster	7	3	6	3	1	3
Lancaster Farms	8	7	5	2	4	3
Latchmere House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds	21	20	22	18	16	20
Leicester	1	3	5	4	4	6
Lewes	2	4	5	2	6	2
Leyhill	25	15	39	20	22	32
Lincoln	3	3	2	2	2	3
Lindholme	14	13	16	17	15	19
Littlehey	1	2	1	1	2	3
Liverpool	23	32	23	9	27	15
Long Lartin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low Newton	15	9	17	15	11	16
Lowdham Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maidstone	0	0	0	0	0	1
Manchester	6	17	23	23	14	8
Moorland	2	8	7	16	13	16
Morton Hall	10	7	6	9	9	14
New Hall	6	13	12	13	15	8
North Sea Camp	27	31	31	21	31	25
Northallerton	41	29	36	33	34	43
Norwich	8	9	6	7	8	9
Nottingham	2	2	2	1	3	2
Onley	25	28	29	23	31	29
Parc	12	15	13	11	23	25
Parkhurst	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pentonville	19	8	10	5	4	8
Peterborough	23	31	31	32	41	31

	2005					
	July	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*
Portland	5	7	3	11	10	7
Preston	9	4	7	9	4	5
Ranby	24	22	21	28	20	25
Reading	8	15	11	18	6	9
Risley	15	16	13	8	17	15
Rochester	10	15	18	12	10	18
Rye Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0
Send	10	9	14	7	6	6
Shepton Mallet	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shrewsbury	7	4	4	7	7	10
Stafford	3	3	5	2	12	6
Standford Hill	33	43	40	27	34	28
Stocken	7	6	12	6	8	7
Stoke Heath	7	17	17	13	17	14
Styal	6	16	10	15	9	10
Sudbury	40	40	28	25	26	24
Swaleside	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swansea	5	10	9	10	5	8
Swinfen Hall	0	2	1	3	1	3
The Mount	6	7	4	3	4	4
The Wolds	3	0	4	1	2	0
Thorn Cross	25	21	34	26	18	15
Usk	22	18	17	12	12	15
Verne	6	3	3	4	3	1
Wakefield	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wandsworth	10	10	2	8	5	8
Warren Hill	0	1	1	0	1	0
Wayland	3	8	7	11	7	4
Wealstun	27	25	24	23	25	34
Weare	8	2	0	0	0	0
Wellingborough	6	11	5	7	9	9
Werrington	1	0	0	1	0	0
Wetherby	1	3	1	2	1	3
Whatton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitemoor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Winchester	18	21	26	21	26	20
Woodhill	12	10	9	3	12	12
Wormwood Scrubs	24	23	25	30	22	18
Wymott	4	2	2	5	11	5

These statistics are based on information recorded on the central Prison Service IT system on 15 March 2006. Further updates and amendments may be made to records on this system in future resulting in revised figures.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons operate a Home Detention Curfew scheme; what the rate of recall of those under such curfews was in each establishment in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [58232]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prisoners who are held in Prison Service establishments and contracted prisons in England and Wales may be considered for early release under the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme if they meet the statutory and administrative eligibility criteria.

The Secretary of State may recall a prisoner subject to the HDC scheme if they: breach the conditions of the curfew; cannot be electronically monitored, or; are considered to present a risk of serious harm. Information on the number of prisoners released on HDC, the number of recalls from HDC and the rate of recall, by establishment released from, is given in the following table. Comparisons need to be treated with caution given the different types of prisoners held by different establishments.

Number of releases and recalls of prisoners on Home Detention Curfew by prison establishment released from: January to December 2005

	Number of releases	*Number of recalls*	*Recalls as a percentage of releases*
All establishments	17,323	2,597	15
Acklington	92	20	22
Altcourse	270	42	16
Ashfield	6	6	*
Ashwell	133	31	23
Askham Grange	67	4	6
Aylesbury	12	1	*
Bedford	182	22	12
Belmarsh	92	14	15
Birmingham	399	85	21
Blakenhurst	299	30	10
Blundeston	28	11	*
Brinsford	57	23	40
Bristol	44	10	23
Brixton	55	9	16
Brockhill	35	4	*
Bronzefield	58	8	14
Buckley Hall	226	55	24
Bullingdon	274	38	14
Bulwood Hall	56	6	11
Camp Hill	58	13	22
Canterbury	168	37	22
Cardiff	183	28	15
Castington	26	4	*

Number of releases and recalls of prisoners on Home Detention Curfew by prison establishment released from: January to December 2005

	Number of releases	Number of recalls	Recalls as a percentage of releases
Channings Wood	94	21	22
Chelmsford	35	0	*
Coldingley	22	8	*
Cookham Wood	95	21	22
Dartmoor	53	7	13
Deerbolt	154	36	23
Doncaster	311	48	15
Dorchester	46	4	*
Downview	86	20	23
Drake Hall	155	18	12
Durham	214	23	11
East Sutton Park	17	1	*
Eastwood Park	146	13	9
Edmunds Hill	150	24	16
Elmley	74	11	15
Erlestoke	71	11	15
Everthorpe	116	21	18
Exeter	136	12	9
Featherstone	125	24	19
Feltham	15	5	*
Ford	569	28	5
Forest Bank	142	17	12
Foston Hall	79	17	22
Garth	2	0	*
Glen Parva	354	71	20
Gloucester	44	11	*
Grendon	222	10	5
Guys Marsh	185	33	18
Haverigg	102	25	25
Hewell Grange	190	18	9
Highdown	135	13	10
Highpoint	141	28	20
Hindley	29	10	*
Hollesley Bay	272	28	10
Holloway	143	19	13
Holme House	137	15	11
Hull	112	13	12
Huntercombe	28	9	*
Kirkham	760	52	7
Kirklevington	25	3	*
Lancaster	49	11	*
Lancaster Farms	99	26	26
Leeds	266	57	21
Leicester	45	5	*
Lewes	46	11	24
Leyhill	282	21	7
Lincoln	59	4	7
Lindholme	183	40	22
Littlehey	26	2	*
Liverpool	261	30	11
Low Newton	154	24	16
Maidstone	2	1	*
Manchester	174	23	13
Moorland	122	27	22
Moorland Open	316	44	14
Morton Hall	92	10	11
New Hall	163	29	18
North Sea Camp	378	22	6
Northallerton	390	105	27
Norwich	117	21	18
Nottingham	30	3	*
Onley	340	61	18
Pare	210	22	10
Pentonville	158	29	18
Peterborough	204	24	12
Portland	123	19	15
Preston	66	9	14
Ranby	276	51	18
Reading	113	14	12
Risley	139	22	16
Rochester	164	31	19
Send	86	16	19
Shrewsbury	86	13	15
Stafford	56	18	32
Standford Hill	433	39	9
Stocken	82	19	23
Stoke Heath	155	22	14
Styal	136	21	15
Sudbury	352	34	10
Swaleside	1	0	*
Swansea	100	9	9
Swinfen Hall	13	3	*
The Mount	82	12	15
The Wolds	26	9	*
Thorn Cross	300	65	22
Usk	200	24	12
Verne	33	16	*
Wandsworth	87	2	2
Warren Hill	3	1	*
Wayland	63	10	16
Wealstun	333	25	8
Weare	158	38	24
Wellingborough	90	17	19
Werrington	4	4	*
Wetherby	19	7	*
Winchester	296	36	12
Woodhill	115	16	14
Wormwood Scrubs	267	47	18
Wymott	67	15	22

Note:

These statistics are based on information recorded on the central Prison Service IT system on 4 March 2006. Further updates and amendments may be made to records on this system in future resulting in revised figures.

* Rates based on discharges of less than 50 are not shown.

Identity Cards

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how, following the introduction of identity cards, restrictions on travel will be enforced on those who have a football banning order but are required to remain in possession of their identity cards for the purpose of access to certain services while in the UK. [61655]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards Bill amends the Football Spectators Act 1989 to make it clear that an identity card issued to a British citizen falls within the definition of "travel authorisation". This ensures that travel restrictions can be imposed. However, to ensure that anyone subject to restrictions for an extended period of time can demonstrate their identity for domestic purposes, they will be able to obtain an identity card which will be issued to the same standards as other cards but which will not be valid for travel. This will be achieved by not specifying the nationality of the card holder on the face of the card.

Immigration Status (Christian Purcarelu)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when a decision will be taken by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate on the immigration status of Christian Purcarelu, reference P1077185. [60055]

Mr. McNulty: I wrote to the hon. Member on 21 March 2006.

Laptop Computers

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many laptop computers have been lost *(a)* temporarily and *(b)* permanently by MI5 employees in each year since 1997. [60172]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The available information is that since 2000 three laptops have been lost or stolen.

MI5

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms are in place to prevent the Defence Intelligence staff from undertaking activities properly within the remit of MI5; what mechanisms are available to solve demarcation disputes; and if he will make a statement. [60873]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Defence Intelligence Staff exists to provide intelligence assessments and advice to the Ministry of Defence. This involves close co-operation and regular discussion with all of the UK's intelligence agencies, including the Security Service, but they have quite different functions. If a demarcation dispute were to arise it would be resolved through dialogue.

National Identity Register

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what contingency plans are being prepared for the rapid wholesale deletion of data held on the National Identity Register in the event of invasion by a foreign power; and if he will make a statement; [60945]

(2) what contingency plans are being prepared for the rapid wholesale deletion of data held on the National Identity Register in the event of a coup d'état; and if he will make a statement. [60990]

Andy Burnham: The National Identity Register will be classified as part of the nation's Critical National Infrastructure and security procedures to protect the Register will reflect this status. Security risk assessments have been conducted on issues such as the physical, logical, procedural, personnel and systems aspects of the identity card scheme to ensure such necessary procedures are implemented correctly and are sufficiently comprehensive. In addition, all security aspects of the scheme will be subject to a security accreditation process which must be passed before the scheme can be launched. However, it would not be appropriate to give more detailed information about security contingency planning for the scheme as to do so would jeopardise future integrity of such arrangements.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the resources that will be required for the end-to-end supervision of offenders under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [52874]

Fiona Mactaggart: We expect Offender Management to be cost neutral over the long term, with any costs balanced by the benefits of the system. There will, however, be some start-up costs. These are estimated to be £10 million in 2006–07.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the likely impact on public safety of shadow commissioning arrangements under the National Offender Management Service. [59967]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Offender Management Service is introducing commissioning from 1 April 2006, at which point Regional Offender Managers will hold service level agreements with Probation Boards for the delivery of offender management and interventions.

The current legislative framework which sets out the statutory duties of probation boards remains in place until the proposed new legislation is in place, and is unchanged by the creation of service level agreements. In supervising offenders, Probation Boards will still be required to have regard to public protection. As commissioning will not change these arrangements, no impact assessment has been made.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action will be taken under the National Offender Management Service arrangements if a probation board or probation trust fails to deliver a service. [59968]

Fiona Mactaggart: Regional Offender Managers will, from 1 April 2006, hold Service Level Agreements with probation boards for the delivery of Offender Management and Interventions. Under the SLA, the ROM can issue a Compliance Failure Notice if s/he is not satisfied that a performance weakness either has been, or can be, resolved locally.

If performance continues to be weak then the process can be escalated to include the National Offender Manager and the National Director of Probation. Ultimately the Secretary of State can use his existing powers in relation to either the Board Chair and/or the Chief Officer of probation. With the introduction of probation trusts, once legislation is on the statute book, the ROM will have greater powers of intervention as there will be legally binding contracts between the providers and the ROM.

The contractual arrangements will be supported by a clear performance assessment framework and transparent performance management arrangements. These are being designed. The ultimate sanction for continued under-performance could include a range of measures that could lead to the service, or aspects of the service, being contested or contracted out.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Offender Management Service sought advice from the Treasury Solicitors on whether service level agreements negotiated by the National Offender Management Service and probation areas were legally binding. [59986]

Fiona Mactaggart: Advice was sought from Treasury Solicitors on whether service level agreements negotiated between Regional Offender Managers and

Probation Boards were legally binding. The current legislative framework which sets out the statutory duties of probation boards remains in place until the proposed new legislation is in place, and is unchanged by the creation of service level agreements. However, the SLAs are the key mechanism for introducing commissioning, and signed SLAs will demonstrate the strength of the relationships.

Non-emergency Telephone Number

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many calls he expects the 101 non-emergency telephone number to receive in its first month of operation; and what percentage reduction in calls to the 999 emergency telephone number he expects to result from the introduction of the 101 non-emergency telephone number. [59919]

Hazel Blears: In May 2006 the 101 service will be launched in two of the First Wave 101 Partnership areas (Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Cardiff). Provision has been made for up to 40,000 calls in this first month, based on the number of calls currently handled through existing emergency and non-emergency telephone numbers.

Whilst the 101 service is expected to bring about a significant reduction in the number of calls to the police 999 emergency service, that do not require an emergency response (experience from the United States shows up to 50 per cent. reduction to their equivalent to the 999 service), this is only predicted to happen once the service is available nationally and has been widely marketed. Successful use of both 999 and 101 will depend upon a significant marketing and public education campaign. The 101 programme will not only reduce calls to 999 but also provide better access to advice, information and improve action concerning community safety issues.

The first wave of the programme is a special stage that allows for close monitoring and measurement of the introduction of the service to allow lessons learned to be fed into the roll out of the programme to achieve national roll out by 2008. The programme is also subject to an independent evaluation.

Operation Trident

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 822W, on Operation Trident, whether he was consulted during the process of drawing up the terms of reference for Operation Trident; and if he will make a statement. [61125]

Hazel Blears: The terms of reference for Operation Trident are a matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, in consultation with the Metropolitan Police Authority.

Passport Offices

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce *(a)* the successful applicant for the contract for the network of passport offices and *(b)* the (i) locations of the offices and (ii) other terms of the contract. [60588]

Andy Burnham: A contract was signed with Mapeley Abl Provider Ltd. on 7 March to provide premises and facilities management services. The contract value, £55 million over three years, has been made public in my reply to question number 54053 from the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Carmichael) on 21 March. This and other main contract terms will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union within a month. The locations of the offices will be announced when premises have been secured.

Police

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the starting salary was for newly qualified police officers in Lancashire for each of the last 10 years. [60794]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* The salary of a constable on completion of initial training for each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

Pay rates for a constable on completion of initial training from 1996 to 2005

From 1 September:	£
2005	22,270
2004	22,107
2003	21,462
2002	20,436
2001	19,842
2000	19,170
1999	18,612
1998	17,964
1997	17,274
1996	16,689

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in each London borough on 31 March *(a)* 2005, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 1995; and if he will make a statement. [60551]

Hazel Blears: The data for the number of police officers by basic command unit (BCD) within the Metropolitan Police area as at 31 March 2005 is provided in the table. BCD data is only available from 2003.

The deployment of police officers to BCUs and other specialist units in the Metropolitan Police is an operational matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Police officer strength[1] in the Metropolitan Police by basic command unit, 31 March 2005

Basic command unit	*Police officers*
Barking and Dagenham	419.1
Barnet	561.0
Bexley	382.7
Brent	679.4
Bromley	489.2
Camden	850.4
City of Westminster	1,617.1
Croydon	692.0
Ealing	686.2
Enfield	574.7
Greenwich	605.2
Hackney	788.5
Hammersmith and Fulham	526.1

Police officer strength[1] in the Metropolitan Police by basic command unit, 31 March 2005

Basic command unit	*Police officers*
Haringey	683.2
Harrow	342.2
Havering	383.4
Heathrow	437.5
Hillingdon	497.8
Hounslow	509.7
Islington	683.4
Kensington and Chelsea	561.6
Kingston upon Thames	298.2
Lambeth	984.5
Lewisham	645.9
Merton	351.7
Newham	781.9
Redbridge	458.7
Richmond upon Thames	286.8
Southwark	891.4
Sutton	291.0
Tower Hamlets	761.0
Waltham Forest	545.8
Wandsworth	582.3

[1] Figures are based on full-time equivalent and include those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police support staff, *(b)* community support officers and *(c)* special constables there were in each police authority area in England and Wales in each of the last 20 years, ranked in descending order. [56984]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

The total strength[1] for civilians/police staff[2] by police force area (1986–2005)[3]

			March		
Police force area	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
Avon and Somerset	775	723	730	765	835
Bedfordshire	307	312	326	361	377
Cambridgeshire	367	394	410	414	458
Cheshire	426	510	512	511	501
Cleveland	313	347	360	428	431
Cumbria	314	310	340	351	380
Derbyshire	692	725	716	719	679
Devon and Cornwall	848	873	897	891	929
Dorset	421	427	434	464	485
Durham	526	519	524	539	534
Essex	753	809	880	951	988
Gloucestershire	257	245	293	317	330
Greater Manchester	1,626	1,800	1,921	1,952	2,153
Hampshire	771	812	872	932	*
Hertfordshire	404	433	461	485	530
Humberside	542	587	640	653	673
Kent	880	938	906	920	964
Lancashire	895	945	1,016	1,066	*
Leicestershire	453	458	499	569	632
Lincolnshire	368	309	311	322	431
London, City of	320	329	318	317	312
Merseyside	1,176	1,249	*	1,340	1,413
Metropolitan Police	13,185	13,365	13,179	12,981	13,250
Norfolk	311	327	346	371	407
Northamptonshire	310	320	340	351	373
Northumbria	1,043	1,095	1,106	1,123	1,164
North Yorkshire	335	330	358	421	433
Nottinghamshire	611	568	578	606	640
South Yorkshire	713	821	832	851	853
Staffordshire	667	678	681	679	655
Suffolk	408	403	412	424	428
Surrey	420	451	470	468	520
Sussex	763	818	862	898	880
Thames Valley	1,188	1,161	1,182	1,187	1,267
Warwickshire	301	298	313	309	330
West Mercia	760	750	744	772	832
West Midlands	1,514	1,688	2,057	2,115	2,236
West Yorkshire	1,275	1,360	1,458	1,613	1,743
Wiltshire	307	346	371	412	434
Dyfed-Powys	208	198	208	223	237
Gwent	231	233	251	255	255
North Wales	405	381	384	408	422
South Wales	973	959	1,015	1,045	1,120
Total 43 forces in:					
England and Wales	39,351	40,592	40,505	42,767	42,503

			March		
Police force area	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Avon and Somerset	902	899	1,171	1,195	1,204
Bedfordshire	372	387	392	412	475
Cambridgeshire	457	454	445	443	443
Cheshire	511	515	554	582	616
Cleveland	437	432	481	506	533
Cumbria	396	409	414	436	443
Derbyshire	534	502	604	602	625
Devon and Cornwall	1,001	1,038	1,069	1,150	1,125
Dorset	525	552	563	581	592
Durham	557	533	534	533	491
Essex	1,028	1,074	1,106	1,155	1,205
Gloucestershire	361	367	375	381	381
Greater Manchester	2,268	2,282	2,590	2,638	2,674
Hampshire	994	1,052	1,078	1,151	1,231
Hertfordshire	554	560	592	620	689
Humberside	663	679	688	660	596
Kent	982	1,038	1,110	1,099	1,091
Lancashire	1,164	1,093	1,065	1,037	1,130
Leicestershire	641	676	661	647	680
Lincolnshire	438	464	488	493	502
London, City of	283	301	320	332	345
Merseyside	1,529	1,578	1,625	1,639	1,595
Metropolitan Police	13,853	14,276	14,591	14,483	14,357
Norfolk	431	445	464	496	493
Northamptonshire	411	427	443	483	449
Northumbria	1,226	1,186	1,225	1,277	1,278
North Yorkshire	449	445	453	438	508
Nottinghamshire	693	710	738	831	895
South Yorkshire	892	893	1,065	1,177	1,149
Staffordshire	715	740	737	746	749
Suffolk	468	513	520	510	498
Surrey	527	568	601	629	732
Sussex	926	951	983	1,013	1,049
Thames Valley	1,359	1,423	1,478	1,522	1,706
Warwickshire	338	321	340	339	361
West Mercia	836	851	925	919	949
West Midlands	2,265	2,264	2,471	2,459	2,629
West Yorkshire	1,875	1,821	1,867	1,912	1,965
Wiltshire	464	466	492	477	464
Dyfed-Powys	243	260	275	286	293
Gwent	298	308	320	317	325
North Wales	439	452	475	475	494
South Wales	1,081	1,088	1,088	1,158	1,097
Total 43 forces in:					
England and Wales	46,373	47,283	49,466	50,229	51,096

			March		
Police force area	*1996*	*1997[4]*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Avon and Somerset	1,213	1,438	1,393	1,424	1,436
Bedfordshire	472	484	523	483	490
Cambridgeshire	530	607	574	586	503
Cheshire	690	735	781	785	823
Cleveland	553	609	586	552	595

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Police force area	1996	1997[4]	March 1998	1999	2000
Cumbria	408	451	451	442	469
Derbyshire	656	723	787	818	826
Devon and Cornwall	1,121	1,159	1,186	1,215	1,343
Dorset	621	615	651	702	686
Durham	531	583	557	559	590
Essex	1,130	1,199	1,252	1,273	1,348
Gloucestershire	415	435	423	504	484
Greater Manchester	2,749	2,612	2,661	2,623	2,822
Hampshire	1,323	1,316	1,331	1,381	1,443
Hertfordshire	754	818	831	835	890
Humberside	683	718	789	840	840
Kent	1,141	1,384	1,470	1,582	1,647
Lancashire	1,349	1,126	1,143	1,198	1,422
Leicestershire	667	755	774	802	805
Lincolnshire	442	521	541	517	516
London, City of	324	347	334	314	285
Merseyside	1,560	1,343	1,502	1,356	1,458
Metropolitan Police	14,372	13,493	12,432	11,257	10,605
Norfolk	529	603	646	648	655
Northamptonshire	511	554	577	587	599
Northumbria	1,319	1,365	1,362	1,443	1,417
North Yorkshire	520	519	543	541	492
Nottinghamshire	979	1,003	987	1,039	1,024
South Yorkshire	1,418	1,291	1,243	1,273	1,391
Staffordshire	754	763	866	1,004	858
Suffolk	485	522	583	594	600
Surrey	754	727	743	733	762
Sussex	1,131	1,149	1,185	1,393	1,328
Thames Valley	1,738	1,825	1,827	1,799	1,786
Warwickshire	376	376	398	406	394
West Mercia	964	942	975	975	1,043
West Midlands	2,780	2,739	2,817	2,652	2,695
West Yorkshire	2,037	2,234	2,304	2,216	2,199
Wiltshire	453	475	519	555	563
Dyfed-Powys	310	322	341	341	359
Gwent	378	452	477	487	498
North Wales	512	476	479	508	519
South Wales	1,287	1,206	1,132	1,223	1,081
Total 43 forces in: England and Wales	52,933	53,011	52,975	52,465	52,588

Police force area	2001[5]	2002	March 2003[6]	2004	2005
Avon and Somerset	1,452	1,611	1,785	1,987	1,984
Bedfordshire	491	524	595	654	706
Cambridgeshire	614	733	786	826	817
Cheshire	833	884	1,008	1,133	1,125
Cleveland	586	626	694	760	742
Cumbria	588	631	676	697	718
Derbyshire	875	953	1,061	1,118	1,129
Devon and Cornwall	1,453	1,639	1,834	1,917	2,007
Dorset	682	741	793	809	871
Durham	566	660	602	588	735
Essex	1,447	1,571	1,682	1,876	1,955
Gloucestershire	506	545	590	633	648
Greater Manchester	2,858	3,135	3,173	3,394	3,248
Hampshire	1,482	1,597	1,720	1,845	1,944
Hertfordshire	935	1,121	1,299	1,366	1,382
Humberside	808	816	880	959	1,026
Kent	1,796	1,958	2,095	2,233	2,198
Lancashire	1,369	1,442	1,489	1,642	1,686
Leicestershire	806	816	934	989	1,009
Lincolnshire	561	600	641	653	671
London, City of	233	247	268	284	298
Merseyside	1,418	1,532	1,752	1,851	2,114
Metropolitan Police	10,040	10,459	11,358	12,144	13,127
Norfolk	694	819	924	963	982
Northamptonshire	694	742	812	858	958
Northumbria	1,416	1,403	1,457	1,495	1,470
North Yorkshire	591	743	723	864	930
Nottinghamshire	1,039	1,087	1,180	1,270	1,299
South Yorkshire	1,312	1,352	1,510	1,574	1,698
Staffordshire	935	1,030	1,146	1,242	1,313
Suffolk	621	692	713	779	803
Surrey	897	1,043	1,245	1,318	1,431
Sussex	1,454	1,507	1,578	1,774	1,950
Thames Valley	1,891	2,061	2,412	2,589	2,573
Warwickshire	412	459	503	520	587
West Mercia	1,095	1,116	1,233	1,371	1,473
West Midlands	2,819	3,007	3,012	3,100	3,083
West Yorkshire	2,228	2,364	2,538	2,763	2,998
Wiltshire	622	649	703	764	811
Dyfed-Powys	401	459	502	523	525
Gwent	537	570	607	623	688
North Wales	498	645	703	832	836
South Wales	1,270	1,435	1,366	1,415	1,465
Total 43 forces in: England and Wales	53,823	58,022	62,581	66,993	70,013

* = force unable to provide data.

[1] Total strength is based on full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number, because of rounding there may be an apparent discrepancy between these totals and the totals in other tables. Between 1986–1995 the full-time equivalent figures were based on estimations. Figures exclude those staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity unless otherwise stated.

[2] Civilian staff have been referred to as police staff since March 2003. Figures exclude traffic wardens, police community support officers and designated officers (s.38).

[3] Strength figures for civilian staff were collected by HMIC from 1986 until 1995. The research development and statistics section within the Home Office, have been collecting and publishing this data since March 1996.

[4] Boundary changes on 1 April 1996 transferred resources from South Wales Police to forces for the policing of the Rhmney Valley Gwent police.

[5] Boundary changes on 1 April 2000 transferred some resources from the metropolitan police to Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey police forces.

[6] Strength figures as at 31 March 2003 include those staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave. Therefore these figures are not comparable with those provided for other years in the table.

Prison Officers

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role he expects prison officers to play in the effective delivery of case management in the criminal justice system; and if he will make a statement. [57776]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prison Officers will play a large part in the effective delivery of offender management. Although offender managers will be based in the community and will be responsible for offender assessment and sentence planning, the majority of offender supervisors dealing with the custodial part of a sentence will be Prison Officers.

They will be responsible for ensuring the elements of the sentence plan are carried out, for supporting offenders and liaising with those delivering interventions in custody. They will work closely with offender managers in the assessment and planning process. Prison Officers will also be involved in brokering and delivering interventions such as 'Offender Behaviour Programmes', in addition to their general responsibility for promoting a pro-social and positive atmosphere within establishments.

Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many prisons inmates routinely eat in their cells; and if he will make a statement. [59197]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The arrangements vary in each establishment, sometimes with different arrangements for each meal, and sometimes with different arrangements for different groups of prisoners in the same establishment.

Furthermore, many prisoners choose to eat in their cell where communal eating is an option.

Prisons

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners in Coldingley prison have applied for home detention curfews in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; how many of these had their application *(a)* accepted and *(b)* rejected; how many appealed against rejection; and how many of these were successful in their appeal. [47404]

Fiona Mactaggart: The attached table provides figures on the number of prisoners who, according to the Prison Service Inmate Information System, have supplied a proposed curfew address for consideration and have been assessed as suitable or been refused HDC at Coldingley prison since 1999 when the scheme began. Information on the reasons for the refusal of individual applications, and the outcome of appeals, could be provided by the prison itself only at disproportionate cost.

Prisoners released on HOC or whose application for HOC was refused: Coldingley prison

	Refused	*Granted*
1999	8	12
2000	1	9
2001	7	19
2002	2	22
2003	6	24
2004	1	8
2005	3	15

These statistics are based on information recorded on the central prison IT system on 28 February 2006. Further updates and amendments may be made to records on this system resulting in revised figures.

The statistics exclude those prisoners who opted out from the scheme.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what proportion of the prison population has access to mental health services, including therapy; [55514]

(2) what estimate he has made of the proportion of the prison population who would benefit from mental health services including therapy; [55516]

(3) what assessment he has made of *(a)* provision and *(b)* access to mental health services in the prison system. [55527]

Fiona Mactaggart: The survey, Psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 1988) showed that 90 per cent. of prisoners have at least one significant mental health problem, including personality disorder, psychosis, neurosis, alcohol misuse and drug dependence.

The responsibility for the provision of health services, including mental health services, to prisoners in publicly run prisons transferred from the Home Office to the Department of Health in 2003. The Department of Health has in turn devolved funding and responsibility for prison health to national health service primary care trusts, which work in partnerships with prisons to commission and deliver services.

Effective mental health services are central to the Government's programme of improvements in health services for prisoners. Nearly £20 million is being spent on mental health provision in 2005–06. The NHS plan commitment to have over 300 additional staff working in prisons as part of NHS mental health in-reach teams (effectively community mental health teams working within prisons) by April 2004 has been met: there are now 360 such staff in post.

In-reach teams are now operating in 102 prisons. All prisons are expected to have access to mental health in-reach services by this spring. An evaluation of the prison mental health in-reach programme has been undertaken and is due to be delivered shortly. We are currently looking at other aspects of our prison health mental programmes with a view to their assessment.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average *(a)* age and *(b)* tenure of prison governors at each establishment was in (i) 2005, (ii) 2001, (iii) 1997, (iv) 1992 and (v) 1987; and if he will make a statement. [58646]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the average age of prison governors (operational managers)—for each public sector Prison Service establishment in 2005 and 2001 is contained in the following table. The ages of individual governors is not available centrally for governors in post in 1997, 1992 and 1987. The amount of time that governors had spent at their specific establishment in a governor grade is also not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Information of this kind is not routinely monitored for contracted prisons, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Average age of operational managers in each public sector prison service establishment

	Average age of operational managers	
Establishment	*31 December 2001*	*31 December 2005*
Acklington	49 years three months	45 years five months
Albany	48 years eight months	49 years seven months
Ashwell	52 years 10 months	43 years six months
Askham Grange	50 years seven months	44 years three months
Aylesbury	42 years nine months	41 years 11 months
Bedford	43 years two months	46 years nine months
Belmarsh	43 years 11 months	40 years eight months
Birmingham	47 years two months	46 years six months
Blakenhurst	41 years eight months	46 years six months
Blantyre House	47 years nine months	43 years two months
Blundeston	44 years two months	42 years 10 months
Brinsford	45 years eight months	44 years two months
Bristol	44 years nine months	41 years one month
Brixton	49 years six months	42 years 10 months
Brockhill	41 years three months	38 years five months
Buckley Hall	44 years seven months	43 years two months
Bullingdon	45 years three months	42 years four months
Bullwood Hall	44 years one month	41 years nine months
Camp Hill	49 years one month	51 years three months
Canterbury	46 years 0 month	44 years seven months
Cardiff	47 years nine months	45 years three months
Castington	45 years eight months	48 years eight months
Channings Wood	54 years three months	45 years nine months

Average age of operational managers in each public sector prison service establishment

	Average age of operational managers	
Establishment	*31 December 2001*	*31 December 2005*
Chelmsford	44 years five months	42 years three months
Coldingley	46 years five months	40 years 11 months
Cookham Wood	47 years four months	43 years one month
Dartmoor	47 years three months	45 years seven months
Deerbolt	45 years one month	41 years eight months
Dorchester	48 years 0 month	47 years two months
Dover	43 years 10 months	45 years 10 months
Downview	46 years three months	44 years two months
Drake Hall	45 years five months	43 years eight months
Durham	46 years seven months	43 years six months
East Sutton Park	51 years eight months	51 years two months
Eastwood Park	40 years six months	42 years five months
Edmunds Hill	41 years nine months	47 years 10 months
Elmley	45 years eight months	47 years four months
Erlestoke	47 years 10 months	47 years four months
Everthorpe	53 years one month	42 years one month
Exeter	43 years four months	44 years seven months
Featherstone	51 years two months	45 years six months
Feltham	47 years eight months	46 years three months
Ford	52 years one month	47 years three months
Foston Hall	44 years four months	49 years two months
Frankland	47 years nine months	45 years two months
Full Sutton	43 years two months	45 years 11 months
Garth	45 years four months	45 years 0 month
Gartree	40 years six months	47 years nine months
Glen Parva	44 years 0 month	49 years two months
Gloucester	51 years one month	49 years nine months
Grendon	44 years 0 month	46 years two months
Guys Marsh	48 years 10 months	45 years nine months
Haslar	42 years five months	43 years one month
Haverigg	51 years five months	43 years seven months
Hewell Grange	54 years 10 months	43 years one month
High Down	44 years 11 months	42 years 0 month
Highpoint	49 years five months	45 years two months
Hindley	43 years 11 months	44 years one month
Hollesley Bay	48 years nine months	48 years 11 months
Holloway	48 years three months	43 years five months
Holme House	50 years nine months	42 years five months
Hull	44 years three months	46 years 0 month
Huntercombe	46 years one month	40 years 11 months
Kingston	50 years three months	49 years five months
Kirkham	50 years three months	47 years five months
Kirklevington Grange	50 years 0 month	50 years five months
Lancaster	46 years one month	45 years nine months
Lancaster Farms	43 years six months	42 years seven months
Latchmere House	50 years 0 month	42 years nine months
Leeds	47 years eight months	42 years six months
Leicester	42 years three months	45 years 11 months
Lewes	51 years five months	44 years one month
Leyhill	43 years two months	46 years 10 months
Lincoln	48 years 11 months	44 years seven months
Lindholme	44 years seven months	45 years three months
Littlehey	48 years 11 months	46 years six months
Liverpool	48 years three months	47 years 0 month
Long Lartin	44 years one month	44 years eight months
Low Newton	47 years 10 months	44 years five months
Maidstone	41 years two months	50 years one month
Manchester	46 years four months	47 years nine months
Moorland	47 years one month	45 years seven months
Morton Hall	45 years 11 months	46 years 0 month
New Hall	46 years 10 months	41 years 10 months
North Sea Camp	51 years 11 months	49 years 0 month
Northallerton	43 years 10 months	45 years 10 months
Norwich	49 years 11 months	43 years 11 months
Nottingham	43 years 11 months	46 years two months
Onley	43 years 10 months	40 years four months
Parkhurst	48 years 0 month	47 years one month
Pentonville	42 years five months	44 years two months
Portland	47 years 11 months	46 years seven months
Preston	48 years six months	43 years four months
Ranby	49 years seven months	44 years two months
Reading	45 years four months	44 years 10 months
Risley	47 years five months	44 years six months
Rochester	45 years 10 months	45 years two months
Send	46 years two months	51 years three months
Shepton Mallet	47 years six months	50 years 10 months
Shrewsbury	45 years two months	54 years five months
Stafford	47 years three months	44 years five months
Standford Hill	51 years 11 months	43 years two months
Stocken	53 years seven months	49 years four months
Stoke Heath	45 years one month	42 years 0 month
Styal	44 years 10 months	41 years nine months
Sudbury	53 years two months	46 years 0 month
Swaleside	48 years one month	42 years four months
Swansea	52 years six months	52 years seven months
Swinfen Hall	47 years five months	41 years 11 months
The Mount	46 years eight months	39 years six months
The Verne	47 years six months	50 years 10 months
Thorn Cross	53 years nine months	45 years one month
Usk/Prescoed	55 years 11 months	49 years two months
Wakefield	46 years three months	47 years 0 month
Wandsworth	48 years nine months	39 years seven months
Warren Hill	—	50 years four months
Wayland	46 years three months	50 years 0 month
Wealstun	47 years five months	41 years 11 months
Weare	45 years five months	53 years seven months
Wellingborough	44 years six months	42 years 0 month
Werrington	46 years nine months	50 years four months
Wetherby	45 years 0 month	46 years two months
Whatton	45 years 10 months	46 years four months
Whitemoor	45 years 0 month	43 years seven months
Winchester	45 years eight months	41 years 11 months
Woodhill	46 years eight months	43 years two months
Wormwood Scrubs	43 years eight months	43 years 11 months
Wymott	43 years four months	48 years nine months
All Establishments	46 years nine months	44 years 11 months

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of trends in *(a)* the prison population and *(b)* the women's prison population since 1997. [59302]

Fiona Mactaggart: An assessment of trends in the prison population and female prison population is given in Chapter eight of the Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004. Table 8.1 shows trends in the prison population, by sex, since 1997. This publication is in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the levels of overcrowding were at each prison in each of the last 12 months for which figures are available. [59306]

Fiona Mactaggart: A table has been placed in the Library showing the proportion of overcrowding in each prison establishment in England and Wales in each of the last 12 months.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has discussed the joint purchasing of food for the Prison Service with other Government Departments and public sector bodies. [60715]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service is an active member of the Food Acquisition Management Initiative Group that aims to explore the potential for more collaborative opportunities in public sector food procurement.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the potential for further savings in the costs of the provision of food in prisons. [60716]

Fiona Mactaggart: An assessment by the public sector Prison Service has identified the potential for savings in the cost of food supplied to prisons. As a result, a number of initiatives are being introduced, including: the potential for more collaborative procurement; benchmarking expenditure; improved logistical arrangements; greater use of IT; use of bidders conferences at an early stage; increasing competition through a competitive dialogue procedure; more flexible pricing schedules; and rationalisation of the product range.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug tests were carried out in *(a)* Coldingley, *(b)* Chelmsford, *(c)* Elmley, *(d)* Rochester, *(e)* Wormwood Scrubs, *(f)* Holloway and *(g)* Belmarsh prisons in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many were (i) positive and (ii) negative in each case. [60856]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are three main types of drug testing in prisons: clinical, mandatory and voluntary. Data on clinical and voluntary testing is not held centrally. Figures recorded under the mandatory drug testing programme are as follows; they include results from both random and targeted tests.

Establishment	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Coldingley					
Tests	496	476	534	579	456
Positive	72	79	99	93	80
Negative	424	397	435	486	376
Chelmsford					
Tests	527	457	406	1,040	1,179
Positive	125	132	119	180	197
Negative	402	325	287	860	982
Elmley					
Tests	1,510	1,025	880	951	897
Positive	272	189	131	195	105
Negative	1,238	836	749	756	792
Rochester					
Tests	410	418	615	755	685
Positive	39	73	77	42	51
Negative	371	345	538	713	634
Wormwood Scrubs					
Tests	493	703	795	1,006	727
Positive	93	118	186	256	122
Negative	400	585	609	750	605
Holloway					
Tests	576	262	316	409	374
Positive	131	69	75	73	48
Negative	445	193	241	336	326
Belmarsh					
Tests	1,076	1,138	666	755	589
Positive	186	174	117	134	85
Negative	890	964	549	621	504

[1] 1 April 2005 to 31 January 2006.

Probation Service

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many letters of complaint he has received on the probation service in Lancashire in each of the last five years. [60796]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 23 March 2006]*: A National Complaints Procedure, agreed by the Secretary of State, enables local probation areas to handle complaints. Each probation area will maintain their own record of complaints received and the outcome of these cases. Unresolved local complaints are escalated to the independent prison and probation ombudsman. The table shows the number of complaints received by the prison and probation ombudsman for Lancashire probation area since 1 September 2001, the date on which the NPS complaints procedure and the ombudsman's responsibility for investigating complaints about the probation service were implemented.

The following table shows the number of complaints made by offenders or their representatives about the Lancashire probation area, received by the prison and probation ombudsman since 1 September 2001.

	Total number received	*Total number received—Lancashire*	*Total number eligible*	*Total number eligible—Lancashire*
September 2001 to March 2002	83	8	5	2
April 2002 to March 2003	191	2	31	0
April 2003 to March 2004	279	9	28	2
April 2004 to March 2005	307	4	41	1

The number eligible column shows the number of complaints out of all those received, that have been eligible for the ombudsman to investigate. The ombudsman's terms of reference (and the NPS complaint procedure) require that all three stages of the complaint procedure must have been completed before the ombudsman may investigate a complaint. The three stages are: informal investigation by the local office, formal investigation by the chief officer or a senior officer nominated by the CO, and finally the appeal stage when a panel of three board members hears the appeal. The ombudsman may accept complaints that are referred to him within one month of the complainant receiving the result of the appeal.

Public Order

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2121W, on public order, what progress is being made by the Metropolitan Police in arresting the remaining protesters identified outside the Danish Embassy on 4 February 2006. [60455]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police tells me that every effort is being made to identify 16 people who are being considered for prosecution.

Rec. 61 Form

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been stopped and issued with a Rec. 61 form by the police force in each London borough since its inception, broken down by *(a)* ethnicity and *(b)* police station. [60557]

Hazel Blears: These figures are not collected centrally. The Commissioner is responsible for the day to day operational management of the force. You may therefore wish to redirect your query to him.

Sentencing Guidelines

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to allow peer pressure to be included as a mitigating circumstance in sentencing guidelines for young offenders. [60718]

Fiona Mactaggart: The decision on what is included in sentencing guidelines is a matter for the Sentencing Guidelines Council. The Government and Parliament do have an opportunity to comment on any proposed guidelines when the council publishes them in draft form. However, the final decision on their content lies with the council.

Stop and Search

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* percentage and *(b)* numerical change in stops and searches has been in each London borough police force since 7 July 2005 broken down by ethnicity; and if he will make a statement. [60561]

Hazel Blears: These figures are not collected centrally. The Commissioner is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the force. You may therefore wish to redirect your query to him.

Terrorism

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Department has taken to prevent terrorist attacks in *(a)* Manchester, *(b)* Birmingham, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Liverpool, *(e)* Edinburgh, *(f)* Glasgow, *(g)* Cardiff and *(h)* other major cities and towns in the UK. [59536]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government's counter terrorism strategy is a nationwide effort to reduce the threat of, and our vulnerability to, terrorism across the UK and involves a variety of Government Departments and agencies, particularly the Police Service, working in partnership with local and regional government and the private sector. Key elements of the strategy focus on the development of effective and proportionate protective security arrangements and ensuring that we are prepared to respond effectively to, and recover from, a terrorist attack. We do not comment on the specifics of the operational activity across the UK as this could assist those who may wish to perpetrate acts of terrorism. As I announced on 25 January, the Government have provided for 2006–07 and 2007–08 a total of £446 million specifically for countering the international terrorist threat and domestic extremism. This is in addition to £213 million provided in 2006–07 for the provision of police dedicated security posts.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many terrorist attacks targeted on areas outside London have been foiled since July 2005. [59538]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is our policy not to comment on the details of alleged attempted terrorist attacks in the UK. These are operational matters for the police service and for the courts.

UK Passports

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK passports have been *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen in London in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [60555]

Andy Burnham: It is not possible for the UK Passport Service to identify exactly how many passports were reportedly lost or stolen in the London area. However, the London and Peterborough passport offices, which serve the Greater London area, processed the following reports of *(a)* loss and *(b)* theft of a passport for the calendar years of 2004 and 2005.

London/Peterborough	*Lost*	*Stolen*
2004	69,420	27,361
2005	64,769	19,572

The total figures across the UK for the last five years are as follows:

	Lost	*Stolen*	*Other*	*Total*
2001	—	—	—	[1]148,230
2002	—	—	—	[1]166,358
2003	—	—	—	[1]184,301
2004	212,745	50,737	11,558	275,040
2005	230,011	45,709	11,268	286,988

[1] Combined total.

Vehicle Registrations

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many road traffic offences were committed by vehicles that were registered at false or incorrect addresses in West Chelmsford constituency in each of the last five years; what offences were involved; what the estimated cost is of unpaid fines following such offences; and how many multiple offences were committed by the same vehicles in that period. [60168]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which motor vehicles registered at 25 Duke Street, Chelmsford, have been involved in *(a)* road traffic accidents and *(b)* road traffic offences in the last year for which figures are available. [60271]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The information is not collected centrally.

World Cup

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government are making representations to other Governments to suspend the Schengen Agreement for the 2006 FIFA world cup. [60348]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* No representations have been made to other Governments regarding the partial suspension of the Schengen Agreement during the 2006 world cup. Such a decision by the host or transit country would have no significant impact upon the English and Welsh strategy for preventing English football disorder during the tournament. This is because the strategy is based on preventing known risk fans from leaving England and Wales during the tournament rather than on the reintroduction of border controls in host or transit countries.

Yarl's Wood Removal Centre

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women being held at Yarl's Wood Removal Centre have reported being raped in their country of origin; whether their continued detention complies with the provisions of his Department's Operation Enforcement Manual; whether victims of rape are deemed to be victims of torture; and if he will make a statement. [59705]

Mr. McNulty: The number of women currently held at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre who have reported being raped in their country of origin can be determined only by examination of individual case files at disproportionate costs. The Operational Enforcement Manual advises that certain persons are normally considered suitable for detention in only exceptional circumstances.

Elderly persons, pregnant women, those suffering from serious medical conditions or who are otherwise mentally ill and those where there is independent evidence to show that they have been tortured would be included among those persons who would usually be considered unsuitable for detention. Detaining officers will always consider on a case by case basis whether detention is appropriate in any particular case. Rape can come within the category of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment for the purposes of article three of the European Convention on Human Rights as defined in the published instruction to caseworkers. The published instruction on gender issues indicates that it can also amount to persecution for the purposes of the Refugee Convention.

HEALTH

Administration Spending

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of their budgets each of the acute trusts currently in deficit spent on administration in 2004–05. [34203]

Jane Kennedy: The figures requested are shown in the table.

	Administration costs as a percentage of total income	*2004–05 retained surplus/ (deficit) for the year (£000)*
Airedale NHS Trust	9.90	-3,288
Bedford Hospital NHS trust	6.40	-8,480
Birmingham Women's Health Care NHS Trust	7.80	-264
Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust	8.40	-2,706
Brighton and Sussex Univ Hosps NHS Trust	6.50	-10,035
Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Trust	6.50	-1,049
Burton Hospitals NHS Trust	7.00	-2,507
Cambridge Uni Hospital NHS Found Trust	5.30	-995
Cambs and Peterborough MH Partnership Trust	7.50	-348
Cent Manchester/Manchester Child NHS Trust	5.90	-7,727
Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust	5.60	-1,146
Devon Partnership NHS Trust	5.60	-535
East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust	7.10	-8,557
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	6.40	-4,025
East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust	7.50	-4,983
George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust	7.20	-786
Good Hope Hospital NHS Trust	7.90	-3,576
Great Ormond St. Hosp for Children NHS Trust	8.30	-557
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	6.90	-17,819
Hampshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	4.60	-2,537
Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hosps Trust	8.30	-4,186
Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust	5.90	-1,566
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	5.70	-5,461
Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust	6.40	-6,443
Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust	6.30	-1,721
King's College Hospital NHS Trust	7.10	-2,734
Lancashire Teaching Hosp NHS Found Trust	6.70	-2,882
Medway NHS Trust	7.60	-279
Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust	6.20	-2,299
Mid Staffordshire Gen Hospitals Trust	7.10	-2,158
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	6.90	-19,876
North Middlesex University Hosp NHS Trust	7.30	-4,106
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	8.00	-11,744
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	9.20	-991
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust	5.90	-8,317
Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust	7.90	-9,186
Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust	7.50	-4,608
Royal Brnmth and Christcrch Foun Trust	6.20	-250
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	6.80	-3,217
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	7.10	-10,217
Royal Nat Orthopaedic Hosp NHS Trust	8.30	-3,793
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust	7.30	-946
Royal West Sussex NHS Trust	7.20	-15,483
Royal Wolverhampton Hospital NHS Trust	6.80	-9,016
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hosps NHS Trust	7.20	-7,806
Scarborough and NE Yorks NHS Trust	6.40	-4,506

	Administration costs as a percentage of total income	*2004–05 retained surplus/ (deficit) for the year (£000)*
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	7.00	-10,115
South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust	7.30	-8,898
South Warwickshire Gen Hosps NHS Trust	7.80	-8,783
Southampton University Hosps NHS Trust	5.00	-11,579
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	6.20	-1,189
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	8.00	-21,656
St. Mary's NHS Trust	8.10	-3,219
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	8.60	-30,657
The Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust	7.90	-7,505
The Queen Eliz Hosp King's Lynn NHS Trust	5.60	-8,499
Trafford Healthcare NHS Trust	8.30	-3,490
Uni Coll London Hosp NHS Found Trust	6.50	-4,930
United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust	5.80	-4,913
University Hosps of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust	6.80	-1,548
Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust	8.10	-1,845
West Dorset General Hospitals NHS Trust	6.80	-448
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust	8.40	-9,978
West Middlesex University Hosp NHS Trust	7.40	-3,991
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	5.00	-203
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust	6.60	-7,638
Weston Area Health NHS Trust	7.20	-5,154
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust	7.80	-743

Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of NHS trusts 2004–05

Alzheimer's Disease

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received regarding the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommendation to restrict the use of anticholinesterase drugs to patients in the moderate stages of Alzheimer's disease. [58852]

Mr. Byrne: Since the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published its latest "Appraisal Consultation Document on the use of Alzheimer's disease drugs" on 23 January 2006, aside from correspondence from members of the public, Ministers have received representations from the Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Alzheimer's Society. It is for NICE to consider responses to its consultation.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* patients and *(b)* carers who will be affected by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommendation to restrict the use of anticholinesterase drugs to patients in the moderate stages of Alzheimer's disease. [58853]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research studies she has received regarding the effects on Alzheimer's disease patients of treatment with anticholinesterase drugs. [58855]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has not received research studies regarding the effects on Alzheimer's disease patients on treatment with anticholinesterase drugs.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures have been taken to assist carers of patients with advanced Alzheimer's disease in each London constituency; and if she will make a statement. [60547]

Mr. Byrne: All carers, including those caring for people with dementia, are entitled to an assessment to determine their needs as carers and eligibility for support. This Government have supported legislation which supports all carers in their caring role. The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 strengthens the rights of carers to an assessment of their own needs as carers. The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 introduced new provisions that will ensure that carers are made aware of this right.

The carers grant, worth £185 million in 2005–06 and set at the same level for each of the next two years, provides money for local councils to provide short breaks and services to carers to enable them to continue in their caring role. Carers are also entitled to cash payments for carers' services to enable them to purchase the type of support they require and promote a better quality of life.

At a local level, it is for councils to determine how they support carers in their area depending on local needs and priorities.

Anti-TNF Treatments

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2027–8W, if she will *(a)* collate and *(b)* publish information on primary care trusts which have not yet met the requirements to fund National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence-approved anti-TNF treatments; and if she will make a statement. [61297]

Mr. Byrne: We do not collect information on funding provided by strategic health authorities, or primary care trusts, for specific treatments.

Health bodies are obliged to fund, from general allocations, anti-TNF treatment for those with severe rheumatoid arthritis who meet the clinical guidelines set by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

Arm's Length Bodies

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many arm's length bodies have been *(a)* established and *(b)* dissolved by her Department since 1997; and what the total costs of establishment or dissolution was in each case. [60398]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested on the number of arm's length bodies (ALBs) established and dissolved by the Department since 1997 is shown in the table. Information on the major costs associated with the closure and setting up of bodies would form part of the relevant bodies' accounts but would not normally be designated as such. This information cannot therefore be provided in the form sought.

The number of ALBs set up and abolished by the Department between 1997 and 2006

	Number of ALBs at start of year	*Number of ALBs set up in year*	*Number of ALBs abolished in year*	*Number of ALBs at end of year*
1997–98	26	0	0	26
1998–99	26	2	0	28
1999–2000	28	2	0	30
2000–01	30	6	3	33
2001–02	33	4	1	36
2002–03	36	5	5	36
2003–04	36	5	3	38
2004–05	38	8	9	37
2005–06	37	6	11	32
Projected position as at 1 April 2006	32	0	6	26

Notes:
1. ALBs are defined here as executive agencies, executive non-departmental public bodies and special health authorities.
2. The numbers include a significant number of successor bodies for bodies being merged.

Avian Influenza

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much H5N1 vaccine is to be stockpiled in London; and if she will make a statement. [60559]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has awarded contracts to Baxter and Chiron to manufacture a total of 3.7 million doses of H5N1 vaccine and expects to receive stocks by October 2006. The H5N1 supplies will be used to conduct further research and could be used to vaccinate frontline health care workers before a specific pandemic vaccine can be developed. Storage arrangements for the stockpile are yet to be determined.

Bowel Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funding has been provided by each strategic health authority for the creation of local screening centres in advance of the implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme; [61047]

(2) how many testing kits the Department plans to distribute in April 2006 as part of the rollout of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme; [61110]

(3) how many people the Department estimates will be tested for bowel cancer in each month to March 2007 following the implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. [61111]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have stated their commitment to a national bowel cancer screening programme, for which funding has been agreed. On 30 January 2006, the new Health White Paper, Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services reaffirmed that the new programme will be rolled out from April 2006.

Five programme hubs across England will invite men and women to participate in the screening programme, send out the faecal occult blood (FOB) testing kits, interpret kits and send results out. 90 to 100 local screening centres will provide endoscopy services for the two per cent. of men and women who have a positive FOB test result.

NHS Cancer Screening Programmes are currently assessing where the five programme hubs will be located. The English bowel cancer screening pilot site at the Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby, Warwickshire, is expected to become the first programme hub when national roll-out begins. It is hoped to establish the other four programme hubs by March 2007, with announcements to be made in due course.

NHS Cancer Screening Programmes are taking all the necessary action to ensure that successful roll-out of the programme, including the procurement of testing kits. Following a formal tendering exercise, a preferred provider of the testing kits has been selected. An order will be placed for the delivery of the kits for the commencement of the programme.

Car Park Charges

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discretion she allows NHS trusts in levying car park charges; [58469]

(2) what guidance she has given to NHS trusts on car park charge exemptions. [58470]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Guidance on implementing car parking charges was last issued to the national health service in 1996 but remains extant. It is a matter for individual NHS trusts to decide whether or not to charge for car parking, and to determine the level of charges in the light of local circumstances.

Cholesterol

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent centrally on *(a)* dietary advice and *(b)* drug treatment for those who are at risk of raised cholesterol in the last period for which figures are available. [36616]

Caroline Flint: To date, the Department has spent approximately £6.9 million on promoting positive benefits of a healthy diet and approximately £2.82 billion on lipid-regulating drugs, used to treat those at risk of raised cholesterol. The Department has not separately estimated the cost of dietary advice for those at risk of raised cholesterol.

Christmas Cards

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost to her Department was of sending Christmas cards in 2005. [46405]

Mr. Byrne: All expenditure incurred in the purchase and postage of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the Department's guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting. Recipient lists are co-ordinated to avoid duplication.

Separate figures for postage costs are not available, as some cards will have been included with other correspondence. The vast majority of those that were not so included were sent using second class post.

Staff numbers, and their time, spent on separate tasks are not recorded, but the amount in each case would have been minimal.

The available information is shown in the table.

	Number of official cards posted	*Cost £*
2003	2,250	2,689
2004	2,500	3,480
2005	1,900	2,854

The cost of each card purchased in 2005 (apart from 200 obtained through a separate order) included a donation of 10 pence to the charities listed.

2Care
Action for Blind People
Age Concern
Alzheimer's Society
Amnesty International
Anthony Nolan Trust
ARC—Arthritis Research Campaign
Asthma UK
Barnardo's
Blue Cross
Bodleian Library
Bone Marrow Research
Breakthrough Breast Cancer
British & International Sailors' Society
British Eye Research Foundation
British Lung Foundation
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Cancer Research UK
Carers UK
Centrepoint
ChildLine
Combat Stress
Crossroads Association
Cruse Bereavement Care
Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Epilepsy Action
EveryChild
Help the Aged
Iris Fund for Prevention of Blindness
KIDS
Leonard Cheshire
Leukaemia Research Fund
Macmillan Cancer Relief
Marine Conservation Society
Meningitis Trust
Mildmay Mission Hospital
Mind
Motability
Motor Neurone Disease Association
Multiple Sclerosis Trust
Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
National Autistic Society
National Children's Bureau
National Eczema Society
NCH Action for Children
NSPCC
Oxfam
Plan International UK
Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Queen Elizabeth's Foundation
RNIB
RNID
RNLI
Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
Royal Mencap Society
Royal Society of Arts
Royal Star & Garter Home
RSPCA
Scope
St. John Ambulance
Talking Newspaper Association
The Children's Trust
The Salvation Army
Tommy's
Tuberous Sclerosis Assoc
UNICEF
United Response
WaterAid
Vitalise

Communication Impairments

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the number of people in England with communication impairments. [59857]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Community Hospitals

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that primary care trusts with deficits are supported to keep community hospitals open. [52544]

Jane Kennedy: The White paper, "Our health, our care, our say", sets out a new vision for the future of community health and social care services. Paragraph 6.43 makes the following commitment:

> "PCTs taking current decisions about the future of community hospitals will be required to demonstrate to their SHA that they have consulted locally and have considered options such as developing new pathways, new partnerships and new ownership possibilities. SHAs will then test PCT community hospital proposals against the principles of this White Paper."

The Department has written to strategic health authorities (SHAs) reminding them of this commitment and setting out the practical arrangements for SHAs. This applies to all primary care trusts (PCTs) and it is for SHAs to work especially closely with PCTs that are forecasting deficits.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library copies of guidance, instructions and requests sent to Kingston primary care trust on community hospitals since the publication of the White Paper Our Health, Our Care, Our Say. [58959]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has not sent any communications on community hospitals, directly to primary care trusts (PCTs) since the publication of the recent Health White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new direction for community services" in January 2006.

However, a letter relating to the community hospital commitment made in paragraphs 6.42 and 6.43 of the White Paper was sent out to strategic health authorities (SHAs) on 16 February. This letter provided instruction on how SHAs should go about ensuring and testing PCT compliance with the commitment and a copy is available in the Library.

Consultant Urologists

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultant urologists there have been in the UK in each year since 1997. [59721]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the number of consultant urologists employed in the national health service in England since 1997.

Consultant urologists—England at 30 September each year

	Number (headcount)
1997	343
1998	358
1999	388
2000	382
2001	427
2002	448
2003	473
2004	503

Consultants

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost to her Department of consultancy fees in relation to *(a)* restructuring and *(b)* private finance initiatives has been since 1997. [32200]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect information that would allow for an analysis of the consultants engaged in restructuring and could not obtain this information without incurring disproportionate costs.

The total spend on consultancy work directly related to private finance initiative in each year is shown in the table.

Financial year	*Cost (£000)*
1999–2000	108,824
2000–01	60,379
2001–02	168,277
2002–03	207,171
2003–04	892,859
2004–05	89,698
2005 to date	47,856

Continuing Care

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new National Framework for Continuing Care will provide for increasing awareness supported by consistent training as set out in the Government's reply to the Health Committee Sixth Report of Session, on Continuing Care. [59858]

Mr. Byrne: Public consultation on the national framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare, which is due to start in April 2006, will begin to raise awareness and promote understanding of continuing care systems and processes. Following publication of the national framework, national implementation will be supported by a range of training to ensure awareness and consistency in application.

Dementia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken by her Department to improve care for people with dementia and their families and carers. [58854]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's policy on the treatment and support of those with Alzheimer's disease and their carers is stipulated in the mental health standard of the older people's national service framework.

This policy has been reinforced with the publication of the Department's service development guide, "Everybody's Business", which outlines the key components of a comprehensive older people's mental health service including dementia care.

Dentistry

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average remuneration per full-time equivalent NHS general dental practitioner was in the York and Selby Primary Care Trust area in each year since 1997. [53680]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Average remuneration per full-time equivalent national health service general dental practitioner in the York and Selby Primary Care Trust area alone is not identifiable from the data available centrally.

All estimated average annual net incomes, between 1997–98 and 2004–05, of general dental service (GDS) dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are shown in the table. These are calculated by first estimating average gross GDS income of a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment and then applying estimates of the expenses to earnings ratio covering dentists.

Estimated average GDS net income for dentists with a reasonable GDS commitment[1]*, 1997–98 to 2004–05, England and Wales*

Financial year	*Estimated average net GDS income*
1997–98	51,200
1998–99	54,300
1999–2000	55,700
2000–01[2]	[3]59,200
2001–02	60,500
2002–03	63,300
2003–04	66,700
2004–05	70,000

Note:

The income figures cover both estimated fees for treatments and patient capitation as well as other estimated payments such as seniority payments and commitment payments and payments for maternity and sickness. Income from private sources is excluded from these estimates.

[1] Dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are defined as dentists with GDS earnings equivalent to at least £40,000 in 1993–94 in fees for treatments and patient capitation. This equivalent is calculated each year by adjusting figures to take into account the effect of fee increases. The equivalent figure for 2004–05 is £59,100.

[2] Commitment payments started in 2001

[3] Figures since 2000–01 use a different methodology to calculate the contribution from other non-fee/capitation payments

Source:

Department of Health and Health and Social Care Information Centre analysis of Dental Practice Board payments and HMRC tax data

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in respect of how many courses of NHS dental treatment the patient paid the maximum charge in the last 12 months. [56471]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* In year ending 31 December 2005, the number of claims by general dental services and personal dental services dentists for courses of treatment involving the maximum patient charge in England was 39,276.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many claims for NHS dental treatment were received by the Dental Practice Board in 2004–05. [56472]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The table shows the number of claims made by general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) dentists in England in year ending 31 March 2005.

All		*Adults*	*Children*
GDS	29,357,532	23,936,400	5,421,132
PDS	3,249,595	2,491,131	758,464
GDS and PDS	32,607,127	26,427,531	6,179,596

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have left the NHS since the announcement of the new dental services contract in each of the last five years in *(a)* England and *(b)* Westmorland and Lonsdale. [58998]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The following table shows the numbers of leavers and new entrants in England and in Westmoreland and Lonsdale as at 30 September in each specified year. Draft regulations governing general dental services (GDS) contracts and personal dental services (PDS) agreements were first published in August 2005.

			of which:	
	England		*Westmorland and Lonsdale*	
	Complete leaver	*Complete new entrant*	*Complete leaver*	*Complete new entrant*
2001	1,207	1,747	2	4
2002	1,352	1,523	1	1
2003	1,236	1,474	4	3
2004	1,224	1,632	2	1
2005	1,097	2,283	1	1

Notes:

1. Complete leaver means

"dentist had an open contract in September of year one but no GDS or PDS contract in England in September of year two"

2. Complete new entrant means

"dentist had an open contract in September of year two but no GDS or PDS contract in England in September of year one"

3. This includes all notifications up to 8 November 2005.

4. Areas have been defined using the Office of National Statistics all fields postcode directory—May 2005.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average remuneration per full-time equivalent NHS general dental practitioner in Lancashire was in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms (i) in each of the last five years and (ii) on the latest date for which figures are available. [60797]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* Average remuneration per full-time equivalent national health service general dental practitioner in the Lancashire area alone is not identifiable from the data available centrally.

All estimated average annual net incomes, between 1997–98 and 2004–05, of general dental service (GDS) dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are shown in the table. These are calculated by first estimating average gross GDS income of a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment and then applying estimates of the expenses to earnings ratio covering dentists.

Estimated average GDS net income for dentists with a reasonable GDS commitment[1]*, 1997–98 to 2004–05, England and Wales*

Financial year	*Estimated average net GDS income*
1997–98	51,200
1998–99	54,300
1999–2000	55,700
2000–01[2]	[3]59,200
2001–02	60,500
2002–03	63,300
2003–04	66,700
2004–05	70,000

[1] Dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are defined as dentists with GDS earnings equivalent to at least £40,000 in 1993–94 in fees for treatments and patient capitation. This equivalent is calculated each year by adjusting figures to take into account the effect of fee increases. The equivalent figure for 2004–05 is £59,100.

[2] Commitment payments started in 2001

[3] Figures since 2000–01 use a different methodology to calculate the contribution from other non-fee/capitation payments.

Notes:
Figures converted into real terms using Gross Domestic Product deflator at market prices.
The income figures cover both estimated fees for treatments and patient capitation as well as other estimated payments such as seniority payments and commitment payments and payments for maternity and sickness. Income from private sources is excluded from these estimates.
When account is taken of the lower expenses ratio for dentists with a higher NHS commitment, the estimated average net GDS income for 2004–05 in the table would be about £74,000. In 2005–06, after allowing for the 3.4 per cent. fee increase, the average would be about £76,500 for a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment.
Source:
Department of Health and Health and Social Care Information Centre analysis of Dental Practice Board payments and HMRC tax data

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on entertainment by her Department in 2004–05; and how much of that sum is accounted for by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [50889]

Mr. Byrne: The Department spent £592,000 on entertainment during 2004–05. The breakdown of expenditure figures for alcohol, staff and accommodation can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many job advertisements were placed by her Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50741]

Mr. Byrne: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Diamorphine

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the availability of diamorphine for medical purposes in the UK. [60839]

Jane Kennedy: The Department is in close contact with both suppliers of diamorphine to the national health service, and is continuing to monitor the supply situation carefully. The product is available from both Wockhardt UK and Chiron, but supplies are limited and are likely to remain so for the coming months.

Dr Chai Patel

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what capacity Dr Chai Patel has worked with her Department since 1997. [61041]

Mr. Byrne: Dr. Chai Patel does not currently act as an advisor to the Department. From 1997 to 2002, he was part of the Government's better regulation task force leading on a number of reports including one on long-term care. In 2000, the Health Secretary appointed Dr. Patel to the modernisation action team drawing up a national plan for the new national health service. He was also part of the task force for older people.

Drug Treatment Programmes

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in drug treatment in England are being prescribed *(a)* methadone and *(b)* buprenhorphine; and what proportion of the treatment budget was spent on the purchase of each drug in the last period for which figures are available. [60064]

Caroline Flint: *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Department does not hold information centrally for the number of people in drug treatment who receive prescribed drugs methadone and buprenorphine.

In 2004, there were 462.785 prescriptions of buprenorphine hydrochloride identified for the treatment of substance dependence at a cost of £11,438.409. In the same year 1,721.074 prescriptions of methadone hydrochloride were identified as having been dispensed, costing £13,972.629[1]. There may be some limited cross-over with buprenorphine, and to a lesser degree methadone, prescribed for analgesia since the same preparation is marketed under different names for the two purposes.

We are unable to calculate accurately the proportion of the treatment budget spent on the purchase of each prescribed drug. The total estimated expenditure drug treatment for the national health service for 2004–05 including local funding was £457 million.

[1] ePACT Data

This information was obtained from the prescribing analysis and cost tool (PACT) system, which covers prescriptions prescribed by general practitioner (GP) practices in England and dispensed in the community in the United Kingdom. For data at primary care trust (PCT) level, prescriptions written by a GP practice located in a particular PCT but dispensed outside that PCT will be included in the PCT in which the GP practice is based. Prescriptions written in England but dispensed outside England are included. Prescriptions written in hospitals/clinics that are dispensed in the community, prescriptions dispensed in hospitals and private prescriptions are not included in PACT data. It is important to note this as some BNF sections have a high proportion of prescriptions written in hospitals that are dispensed in the community.

For example, BNF chapter 4, "Central Nervous System" has a fair proportion of items written in mental health clinics that are dispensed in the community—these prescriptions are not included in PACT data.

Electronic Social Care Record Implementation Board

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the operation of the electronic social care record implementation board. [59720]

Mr. Byrne: The electronic social care record implementation board, established in 2005, has responsibility for overseeing national implementation of the electronic social care record and ensuring consistency of its implementation by councils with social services responsibilities. The board has been set up under the auspices of the care record development board, and works with the national health service national programme for information technology to enable sharing of information across traditional boundaries.

The electronic social care record board will establish national standards for the electronic exchange of information between health, education and social care agencies in support of the implementation of the electronic social care record. It will ensure appropriate links are made with NHS electronic patient records and children's electronic information systems.

Energy Saving Measures

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on energy saving measures in her Department. [58695]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* The Department is committed to energy efficiency, and has signed up to the energy reduction targets contained in the framework for sustainable development on the Government estate.

Engagements

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2315–2316W, if she will list her official engagements for each day over the next six weeks. [31817]

Mr. Byrne: I apologise for the delay in replying.

Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. Information about ministerial meetings with outside interest groups are published regularly on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/EreadingRoom/fs/en and currently covers the dates from 28 July 2005 to 27 February 2006. Diaries are subject to change and it is not possible to provide information about official engagements in advance.

Expert Patients' Programme

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources she plans to commit to supporting the expansion of the expert patients' programme as described in paragraph 5.17 of the White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" in each financial year from 2006–07 to 2011–12; whether she plans to introduce condition-specific expert patients' programmes; and when she plans to establish a community interest company to deliver the expert patients' programme. [57661]

Mr. Byrne: A community interest company to market and deliver the expert patients' programme (EPP) will be established during 2006. The White Paper, "Our health, Our Care, Our Say" made a commitment to treble the investment in the EPP and to support the transition to a social enterprise organisation. It is the intention of the EPP to diversify and be more responsive to the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups. This is likely to include disease specific modules or courses.

External Consultants

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has paid since 2004 to external consultants who had previously been employed by the Department in any capacity within the previous five years. [41198]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not hold information on numbers of former staff re-engaged as external consultants.

Generic Medicines

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what average time has been taken by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency to approve generic product market authorisations in the last five years for which records are available. [57556]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) publishes statistics for the processing of product licence applications. The published figures relate to the total time taken from receipt of an application to its determination (grant or refusal) and also for the net time in working days taken by the MHRA. Net times for approval do not include the time taken for the applicant to respond to the MHRA's questions or for correction of the application.

The following gross/net average approval times (in days) are for the four most recent full years for which figures are available and include all national and European approval procedures for generic and other products submitted with abridged dossiers:

	Days
2001–02	198 gross, 100 net
2002–03	213 gross, 100 net
2003–04	228 gross, 113 net
2004–05	288 gross, 122 net

General Practitioners

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners (GPs) there are in *(a)* Ruislip-Northwood constituency and *(b)* each London borough; and what estimate she has made of the number of GPs likely to retire over the next five years. [60511]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not held in the format requested. However, the table shows numbers of general medical practitioners for each London primary care trust and a further breakdown by age band.

General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) by age band as at 30 June 2005: England

Numbers (headcount)

		All practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars[1] *of which*	*50–54*	*55–59*	*60–64*	*65–69*	*70 and over*
	London	4,846	673	697	445	222	68
Q05	*North Central London*	811	116	122	84	41	10
5A9	Barnet PCT	236	37	35	19	11	1
5K7	Camden PCT	143	19	14	7	7	[2]—
5C1	Enfield PCT	163	27	33	23	8	4
5C9	Haringey Teaching PCT	140	17	27	26	7	3
5K8	Islington PCT	129	16	13	9	8	2
Q06	*North East London*	937	122	165	102	56	23
5C2	Barking and Dagenham PCT	83	7	20	22	10	3
5C3	City and Hackney PCT	168	16	25	11	9	3
5A4	Havering PCT	124	20	21	17	7	2
5C5	Newham PCT	165	21	32	22	13	7
5NA	Redbridge PCT	123	15	24	12	5	[2]—
5C4	Tower Hamlets PCT	129	27	17	5	4	1
5NC	Waltham Forest PCT	145	16	26	13	8	7
Q04	*North West London*	1,175	148	176	125	50	15
5K5	Brent PCT	203	26	31	37	15	2
5HX	Ealing PCT	190	20	43	20	9	3
5H1	Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	103	8	12	8	7	3
5K6	Harrow PCT	142	24	22	12	5	[2]—
5AT	Hillingdon PCT	139	21	17	22	3	3
5HY	Hounslow PCT	140	18	18	13	4	1
5LA	Kensington and Chelsea PCT	108	10	15	6	2	1
5LC	Westminster PCT	150	21	18	7	5	2
Q07	*South East London*	1,028	145	133	74	47	8
TAK	Bexley Care Trust	121	18	21	5	7	1
5A7	Bromley PCT	211	38	21	13	7	3
5A8	Greenwich PCT	117	18	18	18	11	[2]—
5LD	Lambeth PCT	214	25	25	13	6	[2]—
5LF	Lewisham PCT	175	25	25	10	6	2
5LE	Southwark PCT	190	21	23	15	10	2
Q08	South West London	895	142	101	60	28	12
5K9	Croydon PCT	227	45	25	13	9	7
5A5	Kingston PCT	110	20	15	7	3	1
5M6	Richmond and Twickenham PCT	122	16	17	2	2	[2]—
5M7	Sutton and Merton PCT	242	30	27	19	7	1
5LG	Wandsworth PCT	194	31	17	19	7	3

[1] General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes contracted general practitioners, general medical service others and personal medical services others.

[2] Denotes zero.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre, General and Personal Services Statistics

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration her Department is giving to joining the Rehabilitation Project Group led by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. [59962]

Mr. Byrne: The Department receives a substantial number of requests to participate in studies and cannot devote resources to them all. We will not be joining the rehabilitation project group led by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association but will be interested in seeing outcomes from the work of the group.

We support the work done by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and the Department has given the association, in collaboration with other employers, through skills for care, £30,000 to redesign hybrid rehabilitation functions in working with visually impaired people.

Healthcare Supplies

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to report on her Department's consultation on the supply of ostomy, incontinence and wound care products. [59879]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The consultation on the arrangements for the provision of dressings, incontinence appliances, stoma appliances, chemical reagents and other appliances to primary and secondary care closed on Monday, 23 January 2006.

Since that date, Departmental officials have been analysing the responses and meeting with a number of individuals who put forward a response in order to seek clarification of their comments. These meetings were with patient groups, national health service trusts and industry.

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It is our intention to publish a summary of responses and to respond to the consultation in due course.

Healthcare Commission

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what indicators the Healthcare Commission uses to assess the performance of organisations which enter into contracts for NHS-funded work. [59075]

Jane Kennedy: The Healthcare Commission assesses national health service organisations under powers provided by the Health and Social Care Act (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, and private and voluntary health care providers under powers in the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Commission may assess organisations contracted to provide for NHS funded work under either of these sets of powers. If a non-NHS provider of NHS services is registered as a provider of independent health care under the 2000 Act they are assessed using the Regulations and National Minimum Standards provided under that Act. If such a provider is not so registered and where they are commissioned by an NHS organisation it is for that organisation to ensure that the services comply with "Standards for Better Health", the national standards set under the 2003 Act, using the criteria of the Commission's Annual Health Check process.

In addition, health care provided for NHS patients, be it by the NHS or for the NHS by a non-NHS establishment, may be reviewed by the Healthcare Commission under 2003 Act, against the NHS standards—"Standards for Better Health"—published by the Secretary of State in July in 2004. As part of its review process, the Healthcare Commission ensures that services for NHS patients delivered from outside the NHS are commissioned against these standards, including those covering patient safety.

The Department is currently reviewing the application of the powers under these two Acts to ensure equivalence of assessment of all organisations providing NHS services.

Healthcare Professionals

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to question 48216, on conduct of healthcare professionals, tabled by the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough, for answer on 1 February 2006. [59883]

Mr. Byrne: A reply was given on 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2334W.

Health-related Charities (Government Funding)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues on securing ongoing Government funding for *(a)* National Talking newspapers and magazines and *(b)* other health-related charities previously supported by the national lottery. [52774]

Mr. Byrne: There have been no discussions between Ministers about securing ongoing Government funding for charities previously supported by the national lottery. Health and social care related charities can apply to the Department for funding through the section 64 General Scheme of Grants. We do not collect information on whether section 64 grant applicants have previously been in receipt of national lottery funding.

Hepatitis C

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether her Department's hepatitis C professional awareness campaign is complete; and what further plans the Department has to raise professional awareness of hepatitis C; [60866]

(2) what plans the Government have to run public awareness campaigns for Hepatitis C in future years. [60946]

Caroline Flint: The hepatitis C awareness campaign is ongoing. Plans for 2006–07 and 2007–08 have not yet been finalised.

Histopathology

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many histopathology posts in the NHS are unfilled. [58697]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* At 31 March 2005, 54 cytopathology and histopathology posts had been vacant for at least three months. This represented 2.1 per cent. of those posts.

Hospital Bed Capacity

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what projections she has made of future hospital bed capacity in each strategic health authority area in England for the next 20 years. [47435]

Mr. Byrne: No projections of future hospital bed capacity by strategic health authority for the next 20 years have been made. Detailed planning of physical capacity is for the National Health Service locally based on local delivery planning exercises.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *(a)* hospital-acquired infection and *(b)* MRSA have been recorded in hospitals in each London constituency in each of the last five years, broken down by age of patient. [60546]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold this information in the format requested.

Available data indicate that health care associated infections (HCAIs) affect an estimated 9 per cent. of hospital patients each year.

Information on all infections is not collected centrally. However, the mandatory surveillance system in operation for certain infections provides data by acute trusts and these results are available on the Department's websites as follows:

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemia:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/79/13/04127913.pdf.

Clostridium difficile associated diarrhoea.

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/83/61/04118361.pdf.

Glycopeptide resistant enterococci (GRE) bacteraemia.

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/83/59/04118359.pdf.

Orthopaedic surgical site infections.

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/22/59/04122259.pdf.

Data is available on MRSA bloodstream infections from 2001, for Clostridium difficile associated diarrhoea and orthopaedic surgical site infections from 2004 and for GRE bloodstream infections from 2003.

London Health Services (Financing)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the latest financial position is of each *(a)* London health authority and *(b)* London primary care trust; and if she will make a statement. [60562]

Jane Kennedy: The forecast outturn position for 2005–06, as submitted by national health service organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) at the mid-year point (month six), is available in the Library and is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOf/Information/fs/en.

Management Consultants

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how often management consultants have been contracted by the Department; and at what cost in each of the last five years. [45747]

Mr. Byrne: The total cost of consultants engaged directly by the Department, where in house resources were not available, is shown in the table.

	£ million
2000–01	6.852
2001–02	7.056
2002–03	7.266
2003–04	10.031
2004–05	12.8

The Department does not collect information that would allow for an analysis of how often 'management' consultants have been engaged in the last five years and could not obtain this information without incurring disproportionate costs.

Meat Hygiene Service

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for the consultation on the future of the official veterinary surgeons within the meat hygiene service of the Food Standards Agency; and if she will make a statement. [59903]

Caroline Flint: I am advised that the meat hygiene service aims to start a 12-week consultation of stakeholders during the first week of April 2006 on the options for improving the veterinary supervision arrangements within the meat hygiene service. These take account of the recommendations in the published report by Patrick Wall into the failure by the meat hygiene service to test all relevant 24 to 30-month-old casualty animals for bovine spongiform encephalopathy and subsequent reports commissioned by the Food Standards Agency and undertaken by DNV Consulting.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was from general practitioner referral to first appointment for *(a)* child and adolescent, *(b)* adult and *(c)* elderly mental health services, in the last period for which figures are available in each mental health trust. [60291]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not collected in the format requested. Information on child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) waiting times is collected in the annual CAMHS Mapping Exercise and is shown in the following table. The latest data relates to 2004.

Length of wait to be seen by CAMHS cases (weeks)	*Percentage of new CAMHS team*
Under 4	51
4 to 13	31
13 to 26	11
Over 26	8

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which mental health trusts she expects to be in deficit at the end of the 2005–06 financial year; and what she expects the deficit to be in each case. [60503]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Mental health trusts forecasting a deficit in 2005–06

£000

Mental health trusts forecasting a deficit	*2005–06 month six forecast outturn surplus/(deficit)*
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust	(4,071)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	(3,500)
East London and The City Mental Health NHS Trust	(585)

Source:

2005–06 monthly financial monitoring returns

The forecast outturn position for 2005–06, as submitted by national health service organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) at the mid-year point (month six), is available in the Library and is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

Ministerial Activities

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits she has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters she sent in that period. [55717]

Mr. Byrne: Since 5 May 2005, the Secretary of State for Health has made 28 speeches, and 32 visits.

The Department are unable to provide details on the number of letters sent as there are disproportionate costs in obtaining this information.

The Cabinet Office publishes an annual report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend (Mr. Miliband) gave in written ministerial statement, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, which gives the report for 2004. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library. The report for 2005 will be published in due course.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many requests for funding of biomedical research into myalgic encephalomyelitis have been received by the Medical Research Council in each of the last five years; and how many of these requests were *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused; [59865]

(2) how many requests for funding of psychiatric paradigms for coping with myalgic encephalomyelitis were received in each of the last five years; and how many of these requests were *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused. [59866]

Barry Gardiner: I have been asked to reply.

The number of requests received by MRC for research on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)/ Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) and the number of grants awarded in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Applications	*Awarded*	*Declined*
2001	2	[1,2]1	0
2002	2	[3]2	0
2003	4	[4]1	3
2004	10	0	10
2005	[5]14	2	9

[1] Awarded in 2002
[2] Proceed to full proposal which was later funded
[3] Both awarded in 2003
[4] Awarded in 2004
[5] Three still under consideration

MRC does not use the term psychiatric paradigms in identifying research applications.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to fund research into the possible biological causes of myalgic encephalomyelitis in the next financial years; and what recent representations she has received on the funding of such research. [60724]

Mr. Byrne: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC does not normally allocate funds to particular topics: research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available. When appropriate, high quality research in particular areas of strategic importance may be given priority in competition for funds, but research excellence and importance to health continues to be the primary considerations in funding decisions. The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding.

I have received several representations from hon. and right hon. Members about research funding for chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ ME). I have also received many representations from members of the public and stakeholders with an interest in CFS/ME.

NHS and Mental Establishments (Visits)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the *(a)* mental health and *(b)* NHS establishments she has visited in the last six months; and on what days she visited them. [61565]

Mr. Byrne: Secretary of State visited the following national health service establishments in the last six months:

Highgate Mental Health Trust—18 October 2005
The Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust—18 October 2005
The Gateway Surgical Centre—15 November 2005
Homerton University Hospital Foundation Trust—24 December 2005
The James Wigg Practice—13 January 2006
Liverpool Street Commuter Walk in Centre—24 January 2006
Merrydale Primary Care Centre—3 February 2006
Barts and the London NHS Trust—8 March 2006
The Thelma Golding Health centre—15 March 2006

NHS Care Records Service

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources have been made available through the National Programme for IT for the NHS Care Records Service. [59719]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 12 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 862–63W.

NHS Chief Executive (Retirement)

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to public funds is of the early retirement of Sir Nigel Crisp, formerly chief executive of the NHS; and if she will make a statement. [61306]

Mr. Byrne: Sir Nigel is retiring on standard compulsory early retirement terms as outlined in the civil service compensation scheme. Details of the scheme can be found on www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk.

NHS Expenditure

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was paid to management and other non-clinical consultants in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* each subsequent year by (i) her Department and (ii) the NHS. [41422]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 January 2006]:* The total cost of consultants engaged directly by the Department (where in house resources were not available) is shown in the following table.

Financial year	*Cost of consultants (£ million)*
1999–2000	8.718
2000–01	6.852
2001–02	7.056
2002–03	7.266
2003–04	10.031
2004–05	12.8

The Department does not collect information that would allow for an analysis of the type of consultant engaged nor does it have information available for specific years prior to 1999- 2000.

Detailed information about management and other non-clinical consultants engaged on national health service programmes or by NHS bodies are not held centrally.

NHS Finance

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, *(b)* Barts and the London NHS Trust, *(c)* Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust, *(d)* St. Mary's NHS Trust, *(e)* University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, *(f)* Royal West Sussex NHS Trust, *(g)* Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, *(h)* Airedale NHS Trust, *(i)* Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, *(j)* the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, *(k)* Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust, *(l)* The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, *(m)* Tameside and Glossop Acute Services NHS Trust, *(n)* Medway NHS Trust, *(o)* Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust, *(p)* Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust, *(q)* Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, *(r)* George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust, *(s)* West Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust and *(t)* Burton Hospitals NHS Trust are paid on the (i) contracted payment mechanism and (ii) national tariff price mechanism. [48087]

Mr. Byrne: In 2005–06, the following national health service trusts are being paid via the payment by results tariff for elective, non-elective, out-patient and accident and emergency activity:

Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust;

University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;

Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

In 2005–06, the following NHS trusts are being paid via the payment by results tariff for elective activity:

Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust;

Barts and the London NHS Trust;

Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust;

St. Mary's NHS Trust;

Royal West Sussex NHS Trust;

Airedale NHS Trust;

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust;

The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust;

Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust;

The Princess Alexandra Hospitals NHS Trust;

Tameside and Glossop Acute Services NHS Trust;

Medway NHS Trust;

Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust;

Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust;

George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust;

West Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust; and

Burton Hospitals NHS Trust.

All other activity not covered by the payment by results tariff for all the listed organisations is paid via locally agreed contracts between commissioners and providers.

NHS Legislation

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to bring forward a National Health Service Bill and an NHS (Wales) Bill along the lines of the draft National Health Service Act 2006 and the draft NHS (Wales) Act 2006 published by her Department on 21 February. [57663]

Mr. Byrne: The Department will bring forward a Bill for England and a Bill for Wales and plans to do so prior to the Whitsun recess. These Bills are a consolidation of national health service law. As such, the Lord Chancellor will put them before Parliament.

NHS LIFT (Hull)

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the progress of NHS LIFT schemes in Hull. [61169]

Mr. Byrne: Eastern Hull, and West Hull, Primary Care Trusts are public sector partners in their local LIFT Company—Hull Citycare Limited.

Good progress is being made to support improved and enhanced service delivery to patients linked to wider regeneration across Hull where:

Two new buildings are open to patients, Newington Health Care Centre in February 2006 and Marfleet Primary Health Care Centre in November 2005,

Construction commenced at the Newland Health Care Centre which is expected open to patients in December 2006,

Two further buildings expected to reach financial close and start construction at the end of May 2006 at Mid-Holderness Road and Longhill, off Shannon Road and

Further plans are in development for new buildings at Calvert Lane, Orchard Park, Westbourne Avenue and a city centre scheme.

This has been supported by £8.25 million private sector, and £4.18 million public sector, investment to date.

NHS Staff Pay

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of NHS staff whose pay will not increase between 2005–06 and *(a)* October 2009 and *(b)* April 2011 because of the protected pay elements of "Agenda for Change". [60476]

Mr. Byrne: Following the review of the early implementer experience in partnership with the national unions, we recognised that the pay of around 7.5 per cent. of staff would need to be protected in the first full year of implementation. This was anticipated to reduce by 2.5 per cent. within the first year. It is not possible to break this figure down further.

Nurses

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of graduate nurses are *(a)* employed as a nurse, *(b)* employed elsewhere in the NHS and *(c)* unemployed six months after graduation in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each strategic health authority. [58864]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* This information is not collected centrally.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses graduated in each of the last five years; and how many nurses are expected to graduate over the next five years. [58865]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* In 2004–05, higher education statistics agency data shows that there were 17,513 students who successfully obtained a nursing or midwifery qualification (as recognised by the nursing and midwifery council) at a publicly-funded Higher Education Institution in England. Of these, 16,140 students were on a nursing course and 1,373 were studying midwifery.

These figures include both degree and diploma students as well as those who had graduated/diplomated in the previous reporting year but whose qualification was only reported in 2004–05. Similarly, there will be students who graduated in 2004–05 whose qualification will only be reported in the 2005–06 dataset.

Information prior to 2004–05 is not currently available.

The table shows the projected number of nurse graduates and diplomates from 2005–06 to 2009–10. This was forecast on the assumptions that numbers entering training each year will remain at current levels and the attrition rate during training is 18 per cent.

	Nurses
2005–06	17,824
2006–07	18,708
2007–08	19,737
2008–09	19,394
2009–10	19,394

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency Student Record 2004–05.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve retention rates for nurses in training. [53745]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) on behalf of the national health service contract with higher education institutions (HEIs) for nurse training and it is within those contracts that standards are set which influence levels of attrition. We are currently introducing a new national contract framework which provides specific provision for local agreement to incentivise the reduction of attrition. The contract also formalises the need for SHAs and HEIs to work with the providers of practice placements to ensure good quality practical experience. This also helps to reduce rates of attrition.

We also ensure that NHS bursaries are provided to support nurses in training. These bursaries are increased annually. In addition, we have introduced child care allowances since 1 September 2004 to make it easier for students with child care responsibilities to complete their courses. From June 2005, we have implemented a trial period in which students who have to break their courses due to maternity or pregnancy leave are able to continue to receive their bursary for the period they are absent from their studies, up to 45 weeks.

Nutritional Profiling

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on the Food Standards Agency's nutritional profiling model; what the content of these representations was; when they were received; and what she expects the nutritional profiling model to be used for. [60402]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have received eight representations on the FSA nutrient profiling model since it was adopted by the FSA board on 6 December 2005; four from food industry representatives and four from individual consumers and organisations representing consumers' interests.

Those from consumers and organisations representing consumers' interests have supported the model, while those from industry representatives have argued that it is not appropriate to differentiate between foods on the basis of their nutrient composition.

The FSA's nutrient profiling model is a tool for use by Ofcom, the United Kingdom's communications regulator, to enable them to target rules on television advertising of foods high in fat, salt and sugars, without having an unhelpful impact on the advertising of healthier options.

Ofcom is expected to consult on options for tightening the rules on broadcast advertising at the end of March.

Older People (Support)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many local authorities do not provide access to direct payments to older people; [59998]

(2) how many local authorities have refused direct payments to older people on the basis of an assessment of mental capacity in the last 12 months. [59999]

Mr. Byrne: The numerical data requested is not held centrally. Councils have a duty to make direct payments to all those 16-years-old and over who are assessed as needing support, regardless of their age. In the case of individuals under 16 years of age, the direct payment would be given to the person with parental responsibility.

It is up to councils to determine if a person has the capacity to consent to a direct payment and can manage one even if they may need assistance to do so. If a person does have capacity, councils cannot refuse them a direct payment.

Councils should not make blanket assumptions that whole groups of people will or will not be capable of managing direct payments.

OTC Medicines

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the responses received to the proposals of the Better Regulation of Over the Counter (OTC) Medicines Initiative for the raising of fees for the validation of OTC medicines; and if she will make a statement. [58654]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The proposals for fees for assessment of over the counter medicines formed part of a package of proposals for all fees relating to medicines regulation. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 16 March 2006, *Official Report,* columns 2480–81W.

Out-patient Appointments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many out-patients appointments were made in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* general practitioner referrals and *(b)* other referrals. [48843]

Mr. Byrne: The number of first out-patient appointments made each year since 1997–98 following general practitioner (GP) or other referrals is shown in the table.

Number

	GP referrals	*Other referrals*
1997–98	8,152,192	2,679,480
1998–99	8,729,656	3,005,443
1999–2000	8,870,969	3,258,964
2000–01	9,076,409	3,560,420
2001–02	9,172,165	3,824,543
2002–03	9,245,296	3,931,848
2003–04	9,417,012	4,298,016
2004–05	9,504,961	4,626,923
2005–06		
Q1	2,498,359	1,232,419
Q2	2,403,289	1,232,922
Q3	2,265,939	1,187,171

Note:
The data provided is commissioner-based.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will respond to Question 48215, tabled on 30 January 2006 by the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough, on sex offenders. [59376]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* A reply was given on 22 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 456W.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report,* column 989W, on the private finance initiative (PFI), what the projected deficit is for *(a)* year end 2005–06 and *(b)* was for year end 2005–06 at month six for (i) Derby Hospitals NHS Trust, (ii) Cambridge University Hospitals, (iii) Gloucestershire Hospitals, (iv) Newham Healthcare NHS Trust, (v) Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, (vi) University College London Hospitals, (vii) Cornwall Healthcare NHS Trust and (viii) Norfolk and Norwich Health Care. [57512]

Jane Kennedy: The forecast outturn position for 2005–06, as submitted by national health service organisations at the mid-year point (month six), is a net deficit of around £620 million. The 2005–06 month six forecast outturn position for individual NHS organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

Copies of this information are also available in the Library.

The financial position for foundation trusts is not included. Monitor have responsibility for overseeing the financial performance of NHS foundation trusts.

Detailed in-year monitoring data is used for operational management of the NHS. It is not appropriate to publish the data on an on-going basis during the year.

Pharmacies

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pharmacies have been awarded contracts on the basis of 100 hour opening since the control of entry regulations on pharmacy were amended; and what steps she has taken to ensure that all such pharmacies maintain public access for 100 hours a week. [60584]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested will not be available until the next edition of the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Bulletin on national health service pharmaceutical services in England and Wales due in early 2007. Under the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations it is a condition of inclusion in a primary care trust's pharmaceutical list that such pharmacies are kept open for at least 100 hours per week to provide pharmaceutical services and such directed services as the primary care trust may specify.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 1251W, on predictive diallers, what estimate she has made of the cost of establishing whether any public body for which her Department is responsible uses predictive dialling. [59071]

Mr. Byrne: My reply of 7 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 1251W, on predictive diallers was based on an estimate that it would cost between £3,000 and £6,000 (£5 to £10 for each public body concerned) to obtain this information from the bodies themselves.

Primary Care Trusts

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much purchaser protection adjustment she expects to be lost to each primary care trust in each of the next three years. [52439]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The 2006–07 payment by results transitional adjustments for commissioners are based on giving primary care trusts 50 per cent. purchaser parity. No decision has yet been made on these adjustments beyond 2006–07.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assistance her Department has given to the independent advisory group on sexual health and HIV in each year since its inception; what the value was of the financial assistance given in each year; and if she will make a statement. [60864]

Caroline Flint: The Department has provided funding to establish and support the independent advisory group for sexual health and HIV as follows, since it came into being in 2003.

	Funding provided (£)
2003–04	11,721
2004–05	61,828
2005–06	[1]52,794

[1] To date.

The Department also currently provides the secretariat for the advisory group.

Single Assessment Process

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the implementation of the Single Assessment Process. [59718]

Mr. Byrne: Information on local implementation is not collected centrally. The responsibility for introducing a single assessment process (SAP) rests with local health [illegible] social care service planners, commissioners and providers. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that most, if not all, local authorities social services departments have a SAP process in place.

The Department is at the early stages of developing common assessment framework (CAP) that would be applicable to adults more generally by building on the existing SAP for older people.

The first stage of a project to define and evaluate options for electronic SAP has been commissioned by NHS Connecting for Health. This will be completed in 2006.

Smoking

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to conclude her review of the continuation of smoking in psychiatric hospitals and mental health facilities in private, public and charitable ownership. [60078]

Caroline Flint: The issue of smoking in mental health units is a matter that is currently under consideration. The Government are considering evidence and recommendations from a range of sources on the issue, including the Health Select Committee.

Smoke-free arrangements for mental health units will be included within regulations to be made under the Health Bill (HL Bill 76) and guidance will also be issued on the subject by the Department. The Government have committed to the publication of draft regulations pertaining to exemptions from smoke-free legislation, as part of a formal public consultation.

Speech Impairment

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that the augmentative and alternative communication equipment and support needs of people with speech impairments are being met. [59543]

Mr. Byrne: Primary care trusts (PCTs) and local councils receive substantial funding from Government each year. Within those allocations, it is for local PCTs and councils to fund and provide appropriate communication aids for their population through their integrated community equipment services in the light of local needs and priorities.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service workforce reductions targets for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the Review; [52792]

(2) what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in her Department by April 2008, in order to meet her Department's civil service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review; [52853]

(3) what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on her Department's targets to reduce *(a)* the total number of civil service posts by 720 and *(b)* the staffing of arms-length bodies by at least 5,000: what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets; [52935]

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what interim targets she has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for her Department and *(b)* the civil service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for her Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52943]

Mr. Byrne: The estimated net saving in the Department's annual operating costs, for which the headcount reduction target is a key contributing factor, is approximately £60 million per year by 2008. These savings form part of the efficiency opportunities in public funding and regulation costs, a key workstream identified by the Gershon review, "Releasing Resources to the Front Line" and therefore will count towards the Department's total efficiency target of £6.5 billion.

The target full time equivalent level of employment to achieve the headcount target is 2,245. The baseline for this target was 3,645 budgeted posts in March 2003. Of the 1,400 posts planned reduction, 680 were expected to be transfers to other organisations that would not count towards the Gershon target. The Department change programme to deliver these reductions was announced in February 2003. The Gershon commitment to 720 net reductions was predicated on this programme and therefore agreement was made with HM Treasury for this specific target for an appropriate earlier baseline date.

The baseline for reductions in staffing of arms length bodies (ALBs) is 25,174 at 1 April 2004. The targeted headcount reduction of 25 per cent. is a separate policy commitment as published in "Reconfiguring the Department's Arms Length Bodies" (July 2004). This does not form part of the Gershon headcount reduction targets, which relate specifically to civil servants. It is however a driver for cost efficiency savings in ALBs.

The target for Lyons relocations is full time equivalent 1,110 posts by March 2010. The baseline for this target is zero at March 2004.

There are no interim targets for headcount reductions (the Department or ALB), relocations or efficiency savings. The Department's commitment is to achieve the full savings by the target date of March 2008 for headcounts and efficiency savings and 2010 for relocations.

In our autumn performance report, published in December 2005, we reported a net reduction of 695 full time equivalent civil service posts at September 2005. We also reported efficiency savings of £46 million for the public funding and regulation workstream, through the Department and ALB change programmes.

The ALB programme is on track to deliver a reduction of around 900 full time equivalent posts by April 2006. Remaining reductions are planned to be delivered by reconfigurations due to take effect in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Stem Cells

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in each region provide stem cell collection via blood sampling of the umbilical cord at the request of a parent. [60036]

Caroline Flint: Cord blood units are collected and registered by the NHS cord blood bank, which is part of the National Blood Service. These collections are donated voluntarily and are used for bone marrow and stem cell transplantation. The NHS cord blood bank currently collects cord blood stem cells from three collection sites, Barnet General (under North Central London strategic health authority (SHA)), Northwick Park (under North West London SHA) and Luton and Dunstable hospitals (under Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA). There are a number of commercial cord blood banks that offer mothers the opportunity to store their own baby's cord stem cells. However, we do not hold information on the number of hospitals that assist with these collections.

Stoma Appliances

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006 to the hon. Member for South Derbyshire, *Official Report*, column 1795W, on stoma appliances, if she will summarise the views expressed during the consultation on the provision of stoma appliances and other services; what policy decision she has made on the basis of that consultation; and if she will make a statement. [61229]

Jane Kennedy: It is our intention to publish a summary of responses and to respond to the consultation in due course.

Strep-EURO Research Project

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evaluation her Department has made of the findings of the Strep-EURO research project. [59736]

Jane Kennedy: The project has yet to conclude its findings, but preliminary results suggest that it will provide improved and comparable estimates of the incidence of severe group A streptococcal diseases for some European countries.

Suspended Doctors

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors have been suspended in each quarter since April 2001. [60399]

Jane Kennedy: The number of doctors on suspension in each quarter since April 2001 is as follows:

Quarter		*Number of doctors*
01	2001	32
02	2001	33
03	2001	33
04	2001	29
01	2002	30
02	2002	33
03	2002	38
04	2002	29
01	2003	27
02	2003	26
03	2003	32
04	2003	24
01	2004	21
02	2004	21
03	2004	20
04	2004	19
01	2005	19

This is the most up to date information available.

From April 2005, the national clinical assessment service (NCAS) formally took over responsibility for collecting the data. From this date NCAS has collected not only long-term (over six months) suspensions but all suspensions of whatever length now called exclusions for employed doctors and dentists but still suspensions for general practitioners.

From 1 April, 2005 the practice of placing employed doctors and dentists on gardening leave as an alternative to suspension ceased. Therefore the figures from this date will include for the first time figures for what would have been employees on gardening leave as well as those on formal suspensions—all are now termed exclusions. We intend to report the full year's figures this spring, and then to report figures on a quarterly basis.

Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) her Department and (ii) agencies which report to her. [56539]

Mr. Byrne: The Department runs or supports the following helplines, using the 0800, 0845 telephone numbers for the public.

	Telephone number
Asian Tobacco Helpline	08001690881
Asian Tobacco Helpline	08001690882
Asian Tobacco Helpline	08001690883
Asian Tobacco Helpline	08001690884
Asian Tobacco Helpline	08001690885
British Heart Foundation (Tobacco)	08001691900
CALM (mental health)	0800585858
Career Development Loans	0800585505
Drinkline	08009178282
FRANK	0800776600
(FRANK Minicom	08009178765
Health Literature Line	0800555777
Hepatitis C Line	08000850859
(Hepatitis C Line	0800451451
Know the Score (Scottish drugs helpline)	08005875879
Pregnancy Smoking Helpline	08001699169
Sexual Health Line	0800567123
Sexwise	0800282930
Smoking Helpline	08001690169
Smoking Helpline Minicom	08001690171
NHS learning and development Helpline (U I)	08000150850
Welfare foods helpline	8002562665
Winter Warmth Advice Line	08000857000
Winter Warmth Advice Line textphone	08000857857
Blood donor helpline	08457711711
Disabled Living Foundation	08451309177
EHIC order line	08456050707
EHIC enquiry line	08456062030
NHS Accommodation	08456008594
NHS Accommodation Helpline	08456040240
NHS Careers	08456060655
NHS Direct	0845 46 47
Organ Donation (client deals direct with BT)	08456060400
Organ Donation Minicom	08456060599
Prescription Prepayment Certificate orderline	08456018076
Prescription Pricing Authority info line	08456018076
Saneline	08457678000
Sexual Health direct	08453101334
Social Work and Care Careers Recruitment	08456046404
Social Work and Care Careers Recruitment Minicom	08456016121

The Department is currently not using any 0870 telephone numbers for the public.

It is not possible to list the 0800, 0845 and 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by agencies which report to the Department. This information can be provided only at disproportionate costs.

TGN 1412

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency on the suspension of the phase 1 clinical trial authorisation of the drug TGN 1412; and if she will make a statement. [61262]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) immediately notified Ministers of the suspension of the authorisation of the drug TGN 1412 clinical trial on 14 March 2006. I refer to the reply I gave on Thursday 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 105-106WS. An investigation into the circumstances of the case is currently under way as a matter of urgency. Ministers are regularly informed of developments and will make further statements when investigations are concluded.

I have had two discussions with the MHRA on this issue. One was a telephone call with the Chief Executive, Professor Kent Woods, on Tuesday 14 March 2006. I also had a brief meeting with members of the MHRA executive board during a pre-planned visit to the MHRA on Thursday 16 March2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) was aware of *(a)* the inflammatory effect on the lymph nodes of two monkeys of the drug TGN 1412 in pre-clinical testing and *(b)* the adverse drug reaction seen in early human trials of the drug anti-CLTA4 antibody prior to TGN 1412 receiving its authorisation for a phase 1 clinical trial; [61263]

(2) what the trial protocol approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency stipulated in respect of the length of time between which the doses of the drug TGN 1412 should be administered to the different participants in the phase 1 clinical trial; and whether this protocol was followed. [61266]

Jane Kennedy: All data submitted by the applicant in support of the clinical trials authorisation (CTA) application, including primate toxicology studies, was reviewed by experienced Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency assessors and was considered in reaching their decision to approve the trial.

The CTLA4 trial refers to a different monoclonal antibody directed at a different T cell receptor acting via a different mechanism. The adverse events which occurred in 12/41 patients appeared to be milder and somewhat different from the TGN 1412 reactions. It is not clear how the findings from this trial might relate to the events that occurred in the trial of TGN 1412.

The protocol required that dosing of all trial participants occurred during a two-hour period.

An investigation is ongoing into the cause of the events associated with this trial.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MRHA) considered the possibility that the drug TGN 1412 might give rise to a cytokine storm in humans prior to granting its approval to the phase 1 clinical trial authorisation; [61264]

(2) whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MRHA) has submitted *(a)* the data supporting the phase 1 clinical trial of the drug TGN 1412 and *(b)* the trial protocol to an independent assessor for a second opinion on the safety of the MHRA's original clinical trial authorisation. [61265]

Jane Kennedy: All data submitted by the company in support of the clinical trial authorisation (CTA) application was reviewed by experienced medicines and healthcare products regulatory agency assessors.

Based on the review of this data they concluded that it was appropriate to proceed to a clinical trial in man. In addition, the starting dose for this first into man trial was one five hundredth of the dose showing no adverse effect in animal studies and it was expected, at the proposed doses, that TGN 1412 would be well tolerated in humans.

The same conclusions were reached independently by assessors at the German regulatory agency, the Paul Ehrlich Institute, who reviewed the same application and approved it.

An investigation into the cause of the events following the administration of TGN 1412 is ongoing.

Tri-nobutyl Maleate

Mr. Goodwill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is taking to reduce the risk of exposure to tri-nobutyl maleate. [58342]

Mrs. McGuire: I have been asked to reply.

I presume that the chemical referred to is tri-n-butyltin maleate.

Tri-n-butyltin maleate is a biocidal active substance and its use in biocidal products in Europe is regulated by the biocidal products directive (BPD, 98/8/EC). The BPD is implemented in the UK under the Biocidal Products Regulations 2001 and part of the Health and Safety Executive (the Biocides and Pesticides Unit) acts as the competent authority for the BPD.

Under the BPD, industry was asked to submit data on those biocidal active substances that it wished to remain on the European market. These data were to be submitted to competent authorities for subsequent evaluation to assess safety both to humans and the environment. No such data on tri-n-butyltin maleate has been submitted to any competent authority and, as a consequence, all biocidal products containing tri-n-butyltin maleate have to be removed from the European market by 1 September 2006.

Voluntary and Community Groups

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will announce her Department's grant allocations for health and social care voluntary and community groups for 2006–07. [60867]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 175W.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Minister of State's Oral Statement of 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 120 and to the answers of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2030W, on waiting lists/times, and 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2030W, on waiting lists, what the evidential basis is for the statement that no-one waits more than six months for an operation. [61038]

Jane Kennedy: The six-month operational standard came into effect across the national health service from 1 January 2006. No patient should have to expect to wait longer than this.

Latest data for end January 2006 showed that 74 patients (less than 0.1 per cent.) were waiting over six months. This contrasts with the position under the previous administration, when 10 per cent. of patients were waiting over two years.

Waiting Times

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for those referred for treatment by GPs in *(a)* each London primary care trust and *(b)* each London health authority was in each year since 1996; and if she will make a statement. [60560]

Jane Kennedy: Data for the estimated average waiting times for first outpatient appointments following a general practitioner written referral was first collected for the quarter ending in June 1997.

The table shows figures for June 1997 to June 2001 for national health service organisations that previously existed at that time and for June 2002 to December 2005 for current NHS organisations.

Estimated average waiting time for first outpatient appointment following general practitioner written referral, June 1997 to June 2001 (responsible population based)

		Median waiting time (weeks) quarter ended June				
Code	Name	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
QA2	Hillingdon HA	6.7	7.4	8.3	9.1	7.6
QA3	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA	5.8	3.9	8.0	6.9	6.6
QA4	Enfield and Haringey HA	6.8	7.7	8.6	8.8	n/a
QA5	Redbridge and Waltham Forest HA	7.3	7.4	8.7	8.8	8.3
QAA	Bexley and Greenwich HA	5.6	7.3	6.9	7.3	n/a
QAC	Bromley HA	8.0	8.2	8.7	6.6	n/a
QAD	Croydon HA	5.0	6.0	6.7	7.1	6.0
QAG	Kingston and Richmond HA	5.4	4.6	5.4	5.9	5.6
QAH	Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham HA	7.1	8.2	7.9	7.0	7.2
QAJ	Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth HA	5.3	3.6	7.0	6.7	6.4
QAP	Barking and Havering HA	8.0	8.2	8.7	8.0	8.4
QAQ	Barnet HA	5.6	6.6	7.1	7.7	n/a
QAR	Brent and Harrow HA	6.8	5.8	7.2	6.9	6.9
QAT	Camden and Islington HA	5.8	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.2
QAV	Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA	5.6	6.4	6.7	6.4	6.3
QAW	East London and City HA	7.5	8.9	8.5	8.1	7.6
QEW	Barnet, Enfield and Haringey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.0
QEY	Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.3

n/a = not applicable

Notes:
1. QM08R Return was first introduced for quarter ended June 1997.
2. Health authority (HA) reorganisation 2001–02: Barnet HA and Enfield and Haringey HA merged to form Barnet, Enfield and Haringey HA. Bexley and Greenwich HA and Bromley HA merged to form Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich HA.
Source:
Department of Health form QM08R

Estimated average waiting time for first outpatient appointment following general practitioner written referral, June 2002 to June 2005—Primary care trusts (PCT) within strategic health authorities (SHA) in London (responsible population based)

		Median waiting time (weeks) quarter ended June				
Code	*Name*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*
5AT	Hillingdon PCT	7.8	7.6	7.3	7.0	6.7
5H1	Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	6.3	6.4	6.2	7.2	7.5
5HX	Ealing PCT	7.3	5.7	8.3	8.1	7.8
5HY	Hounslow PCT	6.6	6.9	7.1	6.7	6.8
5K5	Brent PCT	6.5	7.5	8.0	8.5	7.9
5K6	Harrow PCT	7.9	7.9	9.1	8.5	8.2
5LA	Kensington and Chelsea PCT	6.3	6.8	6.6	6.8	6.5
5LC	Westminster PCT	7.1	7.6	7.0	7.5	7.0
	North West London SHA	7.0	7.1	7.5	7.6	7.4
5A9	Barnet PCT	8.3	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.4
5C1	Enfield PCT	10.5	8.3	8.0	7.9	7.9
5C9	Haringey PCT	7.5	6.7	6.5	7.1	6.9
5K7	Camden PCT	8.2	7.1	7.2	9.4	7.2
5K8	Islington PCT	6.0	6.1	6.3	10.6	6.4
	North Central London SHA	8.2	7.3	7.2	8.2	7.2
5A4	Havering PCT	8.4	8.8	8.1	6.9	6.9
5C2	Barking and Dagenham PCT	9.1	8.7	8.6	7.3	7.3
5C3	City and Hackney PCT	7.5	6.5	5.8	5.7	5.5
5C4	Tower Hamlets PCT	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.4	7.0
5C5	Newham PCT	7.5	6.9	7.0	8.3	8.3
5C6	Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone PCI	8.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5C7	Chingford, Wanstead and Woodford PCT	8.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5C8	Redbridge PCT	9.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5NA	Redbridge PCT	n/a	9.4	7.3	7.2	8.5
5NC	Waltham Forest PCT	n/a	8.6	8.1	7.9	7.2
	North East London SHA	8.2	7.9	7.4	7.2	7.2
5A7	Bromley PCT	6.6	5.9	6.1	6.1	6.9
5A8	Greenwich PCT	8.7	7.6	7.2	6.7	6.8
5LD	Lambeth PCT	8.3	8.0	7.5	7.1	7.1
5LE	Southwark PCT	8.4	7.9	7.7	7.1	7.1
5LF	Lewisham PCT	8.1	8.4	7.7	6.8	6.6
5AX	Bexley PCT	8.1	7.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
TAK	Bexley Care Trust	n/a	n/a	7.0	6.6	6.9
	South East London SHA	7.9	7.4	7.2	6.7	6.9
5A5	Kingston PCT	6.7	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.4
5K9	Croydon PCT	6.8	5.8	7.7	6.6	6.7
5LG	Wandsworth PCT	6.6	7.0	6.2	6.4	5.7
5M6	Richmond and Twickenham PCT	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.1	6.3
5M7	Sutton and Merton PCT	6.9	7.3	6.9	6.7	6.9
	South West London SHA	6.6	6.6	6.8	6.5	6.5

n/a = not applicable
Notes:
1. SHAs in London: North West London, North Central London, North East London, South East London, South West London.
2. PCT re-organisation 2003–04: Redbridge PCT (5C8) and Chingford, Wanstead and Woodford PCT (part) merged to form Redbridge PCT (5NA). Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone PCT and Chingford, Wanstead and Woodford PCT (part) merged to form Waltham Forest PCT.
Source:
Department of Health form QM08R

West Lancashire Primary Care Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average remuneration per full-time equivalent NHS general dental practitioner was in the West Lancashire Primary Care Trust area in each year since 1997. [58489]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Average remuneration per full-time equivalent national health service general dental practitioner in the West Lancashire Primary Care Trust area alone is not identifiable from the data available centrally.

All estimated average annual net incomes, between 1997–98 and 2004–05, of general dental service (GDS) dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are shown in the table. These are calculated by first estimating average gross GDS income of a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment and then applying estimates of the expenses to earnings ratio covering dentists.

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Estimated average GDS net income for dentists with a reasonable GDS commitment[1], 1997–98 to 2004–05, England and Wales

Financial year	*Estimated average net GDS income (£)*
1997–98	51,200
1998–99	54,300
1999–2000	55,700
2000–01[2]	[3]59,200
2001–02	60,500
2002–03	63,300
2003–04	66,700
2004–05	70,000

[1] Dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are defined as dentists with GDS earnings equivalent to at least £40,000 in 1993–94 in fees for treatments and patient capitation. This equivalent is calculated each year by adjusting figures to take into account the effect of fee increases. The equivalent figure for 2004–05 is £59,100.

[2] Commitment payments started in 2001.

[3] Figures since 2000–01 use a different methodology to calculate the contribution from other non-fee/capitation payments.

Note:

Figures converted into real terms using Gross Domestic Product deflator at market prices.

Source:

Department of Health and Health and Social Care Information Centre analysis of Dental Practice Board payments and HMRC tax data.

The income figures cover both estimated fees for treatments and patient capitation as well as other estimated payments such as seniority payments and commitment payments and payments for maternity and sickness. Income from private sources is excluded from these estimates.

When account is taken of the lower expenses ratio for dentists with a higher NHS commitment, the estimated average net GDS income for 2004–05 in the table would be about £74,000. In 2005–06, after allowing for the 3.4 per cent. fee increase, the average would be about £76,500 for a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Airfields

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how planning policy statement 3 will affect the status of airfields in respect of whether they are deemed as previously developed land. [60332]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southport (Dr. Pugh) on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 37W, and to the hon. Member for Vale of York (Miss McIntosh) on 22 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 401–02W.

Arm's Length Management Organisation Review Group

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish the report of the arm's length management organisation review group. [51902]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been reviewing arm's length management organisations. The Government will respond to the issues raised in the next few months.

Building Regulations (Part L)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the final supporting documents and software for Part L of the building regulations to be published. [54828]

Yvette Cooper: In the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's press release of 13 September 2005 it was announced that the ODPM was introducing the changes to Part L of the building regulations two years early in April 2006. The calculation tool for establishing the energy performance of dwellings was published in October 2005 and for non-domestic buildings in December 2005. The ODPM laid the statutory instrument and published final approved documents on 15 March.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55225]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Expenditure on media training for ODPM officials has been as follows.

	£
29 May 2002–31 March 2003	10,810.00
1 April 2003–31 March 2004	11,487.62
1 April 2004–31 March 2005	1,762.00
1 April 2005–28 February 2006	763.75

No expenditure has been incurred on media training for Ministers.

Departmental Staff Handbook

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the Staff Handbook for his Department. [60130]

Jim Fitzpatrick: A paper copy of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's staff handbook will be placed in the House of Commons Library shortly.

Domestic Violence

Jo Swinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2217W, to the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley), on domestic violence, how many units of accommodation in refuges for women who suffer from domestic violence are available in each *(a)* region, *(b)* constituency and *(c)* local authority in England. [56714]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not available on the number of units of accommodation in refuges for women who suffer from domestic violence in each constituency or local authority in England, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The following table shows how many units were available in each Government Office Region in England as at 1 April 2003 and at 1 April 2005. These figures include accommodation in refuges and other forms of provision including floating support services where victims are supported to remain in their own accommodation where appropriate.

Number of household units of support available to women at risk of domestic violence, through the Supporting People programme

Region	*1 April 2003*	*1 April 2005*
North East	210	250
North West	690	640
Yorkshire and the Humber	570	710
East Midlands	600	520
West Midlands	890	890
East	590	650
London	1,220	1,230
South East	630	640
South West	450	380
England	5,830	5,910

Dorneywood

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the guests he has officially entertained at Dorneywood since 1 May 2005. [59409]

Jim Fitzpatrick: This information is not collected centrally.

Dorneywood is owned and operated by the Dorneywood Trust which is a registered charity, therefore there is no cost to public funds.

European Landscape Convention

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the implications of the UK signing the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention for the planning system in England. [60116]

Yvette Cooper: The signing by the UK of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention does not have any immediate implications for the land use planning system in England. The Government believe that the UK is already fulfilling the requirements of the convention. National planning policies, including planning policy statement 1, 'Delivering Sustainable Development', recognise the need to provide appropriate protection and enhancement of rural and urban landscapes in England, in line with the principal aims of the convention.

External Consultants

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department has paid since 2004 to external consultants who had previously been employed by the Department in any capacity within the previous five years. [41211]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Fire Control Centres

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the most recent estimate is of the cost of the regionalisation of fire control centres; and who would cover the overspend in the event of costs exceeding this estimate. [60274]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The most recently published estimate of the costs of the project is set out in the Outline Business Case. The estimated costs over a 15-year period (2004–05 to 2018–19) of running the control service and implementing the FiReControl project are £988 million at 2005 prices. The Outline Business Case was published in November 2004.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will meet the up-front costs of establishing the operational network and the costs that fall to local authorities under New Burdens arrangements. ODPM will also meet any increases in these cost elements.

Fire-related Deaths

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire-related deaths there were in dwellings in each London constituency in each year since 2000. [60545]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table shows the number of fatalities in dwelling fires in London in each year for 2000–04. Data for constituencies are only held centrally from 2002 onwards.

Number of fatalities in dwelling fires by London constituency: 2000–04

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total for London	48	68	56	67	46
Assigned to constituency	[1]—	[1]—	56	62	46
Percentage available	[1]—	[1]—	100	93	100
Constituency					
Barking	[1]—	[1]—	0	2	0
Battersea	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	2
Beckenham	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Bethnal Green and Bow	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Bexleyheath and Crayford	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Brentford and Isleworth	[1]—	[1]—	1	2	1
Brent East	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	0
Brent North	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Brent South	[1]—	[1]—	2	2	1
Bromley and Chislehurst	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	1
Camberwell and Peckham	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	0
Carshalton and Wallington	[1]—	[1]—	0	2	3
Chingford and Woodford Green	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	0
Chipping Barnet	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	1
Cities of London and Westminster	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	0
Croydon Central	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	2
Croydon North	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Croydon South	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	1
Dagenham	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Dulwich and West Norwood	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Ealing, North	[1]—	[1]—	5	2	0
Ealing, Southall	[1]—	[1]—	2	4	0
East Ham	[1]—	[1]—	0	4	0
Edmonton	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Eltham	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Enfield, North	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Enfield, Southgate	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	2
Erith and Thamesmead	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Feltham and Heston	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Finchley and Golders Green	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Greenwich and Woolwich	[1]—	[1]—	2	0	0
Hackney, North and Stoke Newington	[1]—	[1]—	1	4	0
Hackney, South and Shoreditch	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	1
Hammersmith and Fulham	[1]—	[1]—	3	2	2
Hampstead and Highgate	[1]—	[1]—	2	1	1
Harrow, East	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Harrow, West	[1]—	[1]—	0	2	0
Hayes and Harlington	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Hendon	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	0
Holborn and St. Pancras	[1]—	[1]—	2	2	0
Hornchurch	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	0
Hornsey and Wood Green	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	1
Ilford, North	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Ilford, South	[1]—	[1]—	0	2	0
Islington, North	[1]—	[1]—	1	2	1
Islington, South and Finsbury	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	0
Kensington and Chelsea	[1]—	[1]—	2	1	1
Kingston and Surbiton	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Lewisham, Deptford	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	2
Lewisham, East	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	1
Lewisham, West	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	1
Leyton and Wanstead	[1]—	[1]—	2	1	0
Mitcham and Morden	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
North Southwark and Bermondsey	[1]—	[1]—	3	1	0
Old Bexley and Sidcup	[1]—	[1]—	0	3	0
Orpington	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	3
Poplar and Canning Town	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Putney	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Regent's Park and Kensington North	[1]—	[1]—	3	0	1
Richmond Park	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	1
Romford	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Ruislip-Northwood	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	0
Streatham	[1]—	[1]—	0	1	1
Sutton and Cheam	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	0
Tooting	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	0
Tottenham	[1]—	[1]—	1	0	0
Twickenham	[1]—	[1]—	1	2	0
Upminster	[1]—	[1]—	2	0	0
Uxbridge	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Vauxhall	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	1
Walthamstow	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	2
West Ham	[1]—	[1]—	1	1	3
Wimbledon	[1]—	[1]—	0	2	1

[1] Not available.

Source:

Neighbourhood Statistics derived from Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Flood Reports

Michael Gove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultations have taken place on the role of flood reports in home information packs. [60643]

Yvette Cooper: The consultation paper "Contents of the home information pack", ODPM 2003, sought views on whether the pack should include an environmental report covering, among other things, flood risk. The draft "Home Information Pack Regulations 2006" and associated guidance published for consultation in October 2005 proposed that a flood risk search should be an authorised component of the home information pack. The results of that consultation are currently being discussed with key industry stakeholders, consumer representatives and others.

Homelessness (Luton)

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding Luton borough council has received from the homelessness and housing support directorate in each year since 2002. [60206]

Yvette Cooper: The following amounts of grant have been paid to Luton borough council since 2002–03 to assist the authority to achieve the aims of their homelessness strategy.

	£
2002–03	59,402
2003–04	95,989
2004–05	80,000
2005–06	80,000

Luton borough council has also received the following amounts of Supporting People administrative and programme grant for housing-related support services:

	Admin (£)	Programme (£)
2002–03	186,853	—
2003–04	186,432	4,686,462
2004–05	192,125	4,621,754
2005–06	125,700	4,429,224

The Supporting People programme went live in April 2003. Prior to this date the Government contributed towards the administration costs of administering authorities in establishing the programme.

Hostels Improvement Programme

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the refurbishment schemes in the East of England being delivered with funding from the Hostels Improvement Programme. [60205]

Yvette Cooper: There are a number of schemes in the East of England which are being delivered with funding from the £90 million Hostels Capital Improvement Programme. They include a feasibility study for a proposed new hostel in Luton; improvements to the Victoria road hostel in Cambridge; a controlled drinking residential project in Cambridge, and funding for five refuges for women fleeing domestic violence in the region.

Household Projections

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the sub-regional household projections will be published; and if he will make a statement. [60512]

Yvette Cooper: Sub-regional household projections (2003 based) will be published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website on 5 April.

Housing

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for tackling overcrowding in residential accommodation in West Lancashire; and if he will make a statement. [58412]

Yvette Cooper: The Government intend to consult this year on the statutory overcrowding standards which are set in 1935. The definition fails to capture the complexity of modern society and is dated.

In West Lancashire, funding from the Housing Corporation and the District Council will continue to support schemes and measures to tackle a range of housing issues including overcrowding. Part of this approach will be to better understand need, and the council's recent housing needs survey and the Annual Monitoring report will inform this.

Changing the definition alone, will not tackle overcrowding, therefore the government will continue promoting better preventative approaches, and support investment in areas where required. The Government have doubled its investment in social housing from 1997 levels, and the Housing Corporation's programme of social housing investment over the next two years for every region will be available shortly at: www.housingcorp.gov.uk.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of households which *(a)* rented in the private sector, *(b)* rented in the social housing sector, *(c)* were owner occupiers owning outright, *(d)* were owner occupiers with mortgage and *(e)* purchased a property for the first time with a mortgage in year since 1996–97. [60128]

Yvette Cooper: In answer to *(a)*, *(b)*, *(c)* and *(d)*, the estimated number of households in England by tenure in each year since 1996 was as follows.

Table 1: number of households in England by housing tenure, 1996–2005

Thousand

	Tenure				
	Owner occupiers				
	Owned outright	*Buying with a mortgage*	*Social renters*	*Private renters*	*Total*
1996	5,115	8,407	4,218	1,995	19,735
1997	5,236	8,351	4,194	2,053	19,834
1998	5,384	8,398	4,124	2,063	19,970
1999	5,563	8,458	4,037	1,998	20,057
2000	5,740	8,527	3,930	2,017	20,213
2001	5,840	8,444	3,979	2,035	20,298
2002	5,988	8,466	3,952	2,112	20,517
2003	6,133	8,441	3,779	2,212	20,564
2004	6,239	8,337	3,784	2,226	20,586
2005	6,320	8,326	3,656	2,385	20,687

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

(e) I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns: 914W–15W.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact of net immigration on housing demand in England over the next 20 years. [43008]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 2003 based household projections for England, estimated that out of 209,000 additional household per year between 2003 and 2026 about 65,000 per year (31 per cent.) is attributable to net migration into England. This assumes migrants have a similar average household size to the average population.

Research for the Town and Country Planning Association takes account of the higher average household size of recent migrants and estimates that 23 per cent. of household growth is attributable to net migration. In the longer term, however, the average household size of migrants may move towards that of the overall population.

Out of the 209,000 additional households per year it is projected that 150,000 of these will be single person households, 72 per cent. of the growth. Most of these 'one person households' are projected in the older age groups, with 137,000 over 35 years and 55,000 over 65 years.

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will introduce legislation to establish the legal powers of the Housing Corporation. [55690]

Yvette Cooper: As we have previously announced, we are seeking to legislate to modernise the Housing Corporation's decision making powers, at the earliest opportunity. We expect to publish legislation shortly.

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government are taking to meet its target to provide 60 per cent. of new homes on brownfield sites by 2008. [60445]

Yvette Cooper: The policies in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing" (PPG3) and in draft Planning Policy Statement 3: "Housing" (PPS3), published for consultation in December 2005, in particular the policy to give priority to developing suitable brownfield land in preference to greenfield, support the target that, by 2008, 60 per cent. of additional housing should be on brownfield land. The latest Land Use Change Statistics show that 72 per cent. of new dwellings were built on brownfield land in 2004.

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is his Department's policy to use urban greenfield land for social housing developments. [60448]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's planning policy for housing set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing" (PPG3) gives priority to re-using suitable brownfield land in preference to the development of greenfield. Draft Planning Policy Statement 3 "Housing" (PPS3), published for consultation in December 2005, continues the priority for development of brownfield land. However, both PPG3 and draft PPS3 recognise that there may be circumstances where suitable greenfield land is needed to meet the level of housing provision set out in Regional Spatial Strategies.

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much brownfield land has been sold for social housing development since 1997; [60449]

(2) how much urban greenfield land has been sold off for social housing development since 1997. [60446]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much funding for housing each London borough has received in each financial year since the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 came into force; and if he will make a statement; [60542]

(2) how many applications for funding under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 within each London borough have been *(a)* successful, *(b)* refused and *(c)* put on the waiting list; and if he will make a statement. [60543]

Yvette Cooper: Information on Government funding in support of London borough councils' housing capital investment in each financial year since the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 came into force has been placed in the Library.

The Government does not collect centrally the number of applications for renovation grants or information on waiting lists. Information on the number and the total value of renovation grants under the 1996 Act completed in London boroughs in each year since 1997 has also been placed in the Library.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely distribution of housing growth between cities and rural areas over the next 20 years; and what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the balance of housing growth on the provision of affordable housing in rural areas. [57365]

Yvette Cooper: The distribution of housing growth between cities and rural areas, and a region's approach to meeting rural housing and rural affordable housing needs, is determined as part of the process of preparing regional spatial strategies. In determining the distribution, regional planning bodies should undertake a sustainability appraisal and take into account evidence such as the need for housing and the availability of land for housing.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he issues to local authorities which plan to ballot tenants on housing stock transfer proposals; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's proposed review of strategic investment in council housing on that guidance. [53341]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Housing Transfer Manual—2005 Programme" provides guidance to authorities who wish to transfer ownership and management of all or part of their housing stock to a registered social landlord. Section 10 deals with the consultation exercise and establishing tenants views on the proposals. We are not proposing to change the guidance.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the number of empty residential properties owned by local authorities. [59030]

Yvette Cooper: The Deputy Prime Minister collects data on the number of empty residential properties owned by local authorities on an annual basis through the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix. The latest figures available show that as at 1 April 2005 there were 48,000 vacant dwellings (2.2 per cent. of the total stock), this includes many that are unavailable for letting because they are awaiting major works or earmarked for demolition. These figures are for all vacant dwellings, including dwellings that have been empty for less than six months, some for less than one month.

A breakdown of the reasons why local authority owned dwellings are empty is collected in the Business Plan Statistical Appendix—Annual Monitoring return. These include minor repairs, works and awaiting demolition. This information is reported at the level of individual local authorities.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable homes have been *(a)* started and *(b)* completed in the last five years in each London borough; and if he will make a statement. [60544]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of registered social landlord and local authority dwellings for rent started and completed as reported by building control can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's web site: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/66/Table253Excel860Kb_id1156066.xls. Information is only available for years shown.

For the total supply of social homes including new build and acquisitions, as reported by the Housing Corporation, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 279W.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what initiatives are in place to assist *(a)* first time home buyers and *(b)* first time home buyers with little or poor credit rating. [59940]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 22 March 2006]*: Our new HomeBuy scheme, incorporating the First Time Buyers Initiative (FTBi) and the Key Worker Living programme, will begin on 1 April 2006. This will replace the existing low cost home ownership programme and offers affordable home ownership on an equity sharing basis to social tenants, those on the housing register, key public sector workers and other first time buyers prioritised for assistance in their region by Regional Housing Boards. Over the five years to 2010, we aim to help over 100,000 households into sustainable home ownership who would not otherwise be able to afford it.

There will be three HomeBuy products: Social HomeBuy will enable social tenants of participating local authorities and housing associations to buy a share in their current home at a discount; New Build HomeBuy, including FTBi which uses public sector land, will enable people to buy a share of a newly built property; and Open Market HomeBuy will enable people to buy a property on the open market with the help of an equity loan. Homebuy agents, who provide a one-stop shop for applicants for HomeBuy products, and other registered social landlords, will take credit ratings into account in assessing applicants' suitability to access and sustain home ownership.

Income support for mortgage interest is available to provide protection for all home owners whose circumstances deteriorate so that they need to claim income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance or state pension credit. Home owners are also encouraged to make provision through savings and private insurance.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the proposed home condition report will contain information on the *(a)* fittings, *(b)* fixtures, *(c)* number of bedrooms, *(d)* number of parking spaces, *(e)* number of garage spaces, *(f)* central heating and *(g)* size of garden of a domestic property. [56089]

Yvette Cooper: The Home Condition Report will be of a similar level of detail as the current Homebuyer's Survey.

The report will provide a summary, giving general information about the property, including the number of bedrooms, the number of allocated parking spaces, and if any garage is a single, double, or larger. The summary will reveal whether there is a garden, but not the size of the garden.

The summary will also provide information about the type of central heating within the home, and the report will allocate a condition rating based on a visual inspection of the visible parts, as well as a condition rating for fittings such as built in kitchens and bathrooms.

Other documents included within the Home Information Pack will enable further information to be provided, such as the home contents form, detailing what is included in the sale, and title plans showing the extent of the property and land.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1359W, on home information packs, what estimate he has made of the price of a home information pack including VAT; whether all elements of the home information pack will have VAT levied on them; and what estimate he has made of the annual VAT revenue which will be raised from home information packs. [60186]

Yvette Cooper: The cost of a Home Information Pack will be determined by the market, however ODPM estimates that a pack will cost between £600 and £700, including VAT, for an average home.

The contents of the pack will be specified in regulations to be made later this year. With the exception of the Home Condition Report, all items proposed to be included in the pack are already established elements of the present home buying and selling process. The Home Condition Report will be additional in transactions where currently no survey is carried out. With the exception of local searches provided by a local authority, and documents provided by the seller, elements of the pack are likely, as is the case now, to be liable to VAT.

No estimate has been made of the revenue yield from home information packs.

The introduction of home improvement packs is likely to reduce the amount of wasted expenditure by buyers and sellers, for example where several buyers currently pay for the same information on the same property when sales fall through.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the Government's most recent estimate is of the percentage of new build homes that have been sold and let to key workers, broken down by Government office region. [60121]

Yvette Cooper: For the regions in which the Key Worker Living programme operates, the percentage of homes built for key workers that have been sold and let (or are in the process of being sold and let) to key workers is:

73 per cent. in London,

73 per cent. in the South East and;

63 per cent. in the East.

The remaining units are in the process of being marketed for sale/let.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what departmental working groups are carrying out work for departmental sections *(a)* HSF6—Right to Buy, *(b)* LGF 4D—National Non-Domestic Rates Policy, *(c)* LGF 5—Council Tax Capping Division and *(d)* LGF 2B—Council Tax and Valuation Tribunals Policy Branch. [48049]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There is no formal definition of what constitutes a departmental working group. There is currently no internal group which is referred to as a "working group" working for the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister's sections listed.

Local Government Pensions

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list the pension funds covered by the Local Government Pension Scheme; [60257]

(2) if he will list the 2004 valuation reports of the funds within the Local Government Pension Scheme. [60285]

Mr. Woolas: The local authorities in England and Wales which have specific statutory responsibility for administering the Local Government Pension Scheme, and for managing and investing its pension funds are:

London

Barking and Dagenham
Barnet
Bexley
Brent
Bromley
Camden
Croydon
Ealing
Enfield
Greenwich
Hackney
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Harrow
Havering
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Islington
Kensington and Chelsea
Kingston upon Thames
Lambeth
Lewisham
City of London
Merton
Newham
Redbridge
Richmond
Southwark
Sutton
Tower Hamlets
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth
City of Westminster

England and Wales

Avon
Bedfordshire
Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Cambridgeshire
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
Cheshire
City and County of Swansea
Clwyd Pension Fund
Cornwall
Cumbria
Derbyshire
Devon
Dorset
Durham
Environment Agency
East Sussex
Essex
Gloucestershire
Greater Manchester
Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund
Gwynedd Pension Fund
Hampshire
Hertfordshire
East Riding Yorkshire
Isle of Wight
Kent
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
London Pension Fund Authority
Merseyside

Norfolk
Northamptonshire
Northumberland
North Yorkshire
Nottinghamshire
Oxfordshire
Powys County Council Pension Fund
Rhondda Cynon Taff
Shropshire
Somerset
Staffordshire
South Yorkshire
South Yorkshire Passenger Transport
Suffolk
Surrey
Teesside
Tyne and Wear
Warwickshire
West Midlands
West Midlands Passenger Transport
West Sussex
West Yorkshire
Wiltshire
Worcestershire

Each of the above authorities undertook an actuarial valuation of its pension funds at 31 March 2004, as required by the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulation 1995.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he last travelled on official business by train. [59403]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Deputy Prime Minister travelled by train to and from his constituency on Monday and Thursday last week, beginning Monday 20 March, as he does on a regular basis.

All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his most recent estimate is of the total number of *(a)* mobile telephone masts and *(b)* picocell mobile telephone masts in England; and what assessment he has made of the demand for new (i) masts and (ii) picocell masts as part of 3G rollout. [60193]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister makes no assessment of base station numbers. However, we are advised that there are approximately 47,000 base stations across the country at present for all mobile phone network operators, this includes 2G and 3G networks.

The licences to operate 3G networks require that 80 per cent. of the population will have access to the network by the end of 2007. It is expected that in total 50,000 base stations will be required to meet this obligation. We do not have the information on which of these base-stations are of what particular capacity.

MOD Empty Quarters

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on whether long-term empty service quarters could be made available for sale to private individuals. [54743]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* As part of an on-going framework agreement, English Partnerships has regular discussions with Defence Estates, an agency of the Ministry of Defence, about the future use of surplus defence land and buildings.

Multiple Occupation Licensing

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what minimum property attributes are needed for a local authority to introduce discretionary house in multiple occupation licensing of a residential property. [59133]

Yvette Cooper: Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities powers to licence HMOs that fall outside the scope of mandatory licensing.

Before designating an area for additional licensing, local authorities must consider that the HMOs which will be covered by such designation are giving rise to problems for the occupants of the property or members of the public because of poor management arrangements. They are also required to consult those likely to be affected by the designation and take account of any representations received.

The Act requires authorities to ensure that the use of additional licensing is in accordance with their overall housing strategy and forms part of a co-ordinated approach to deal with wider issues such as homelessness and anti-social behaviour. They are also required to ensure that there are no other courses of action that could be used to deal with the problems identified and that additional licensing will, whether on its own or in conjunction with other policies, make a significant contribution to dealing with the problems from which the area is suffering.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's policy is on subsidising by local authorities of the costs of housing in multiple occupation licensing through increased council tax. [59134]

Yvette Cooper: Section 63(7) of the Housing Act 2004 enables local housing authorities to have regard to all its costs in carrying out the administration of the licensing scheme when setting licence fees.

We expect local authorities to ensure that the level of fees they have set is sufficient to cover the full costs of their responsibilities in relation to licensing.

In addition authorities will be expected to establish a coherent and transparent fee structure that is set up in time for the commencement of the licensing provisions, on 6 April 2006. This structure must operate within and in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public

Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) accountancy framework. We will also rely on the audit process to ensure that fee levels remain proportionate.

Finally, the Government provided funding of £5 million to the local government's improvement arm, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), to cover the impact of start-up costs of licensing on local authority resources.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether there is an upper limit on the fees that local authorities can charge landlords for *(a)* discretionary and *(b)* mandatory housing in multiple occupation licensing. [59136]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have not specified an upper limit on licence fees chargeable for *(a)* discretionary or *(b)* mandatory licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMO). Local authorities have been encouraged, in consultation with landlords operating in their areas, to develop a transparent and clear fee structure regime which reflects the need to recover the costs of the administration of licensing without placing additional burdens on local council tax payers. The Improvement and Development Agency, Local Government Association and the Charted Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in collaboration with local authorities and landlord representative bodies have developed a toolkit to assist local authorities in determining fee structures. This is due to be published in early spring.

In addition, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy will provide guidance to authorities and the audit process will ensure that fee levels remain proportionate.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what property attributes are necessary for mandatory house in multiple occupation licensing of a residential property. [59137]

Yvette Cooper: Mandatory HMO licensing will apply to the highest risk HMOs which have been identified as those of three or more storeys and occupied by five or more persons who together form two or more households.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government has provided additional funding to local authorities to meet the *(a)* set-up and *(b)* ongoing costs of the proposed housing in multiple occupation licensing scheme. [59180]

Yvette Cooper: To assist local authorities with set up costs for licensing, the Government provided £5 million in 2005–06 to the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), to fund a programme of assistance for local authorities. A further £3 million is being made available for 2006–07. The programme includes training for local authority front line staff and strategic policy makers to enable authorities to deliver their statutory duties. The programme has also encouraged local authorities to create genuine and positive working relationships with landlords and landlord organisations.

Once licensing is in force, local authorities will be expected to cover their ongoing costs through licence fees.

Official Residences

Mr. Heald: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure was on those properties in 2004–05; how much was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2004–05; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2004–05. [50875]

Jim Fitzpatrick: With regard to which residencies the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for and who occupies them, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister occupies Admiralty House as his official residence assigned to him by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

On general running and refurbishment/maintenance costs of residencies, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 326W to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman).

Ministers occupying official residencies do not pay tax on the living accommodation itself. However, tax is paid on the ancillary services (lighting, heating etc) a sum limited to 10 per cent. of his/her taxable ministerial salary and benefits (if any). The costs of other expenditure items in the official residence in Admiralty House of my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister are as follows:

(a) There have been no flowers or plants provided from public funds.

(b) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's entertainment budget does not detail expenditure by venue and this could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

(c) There has been no expenditure on food from public funds.

(d) The cost of telephone calls was £486.57 in 2004–05.

(e) With regard to the cost of electricity and gas, the operation of Admiralty House is covered by a single facilities management contract which covers maintenance, renovation, security and running costs. It is not possible, within the overall total, to separately identify the electricity and gas costs that arise from the three flats in Admiralty House, although for internal accounting purposes the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister meets 20.7 per cent. of the costs of the operation of the entire building. The 20.7 per cent. is derived from the floor area of the flat occupied by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, as a proportion of the total floor area of Admiralty House.

(i) There are no domestic staff providing services in the official residence occupied by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister.

(ii) Maintenance within the residence is provided under a Cabinet Office contract and the cost of this is included within the service charge. There are no maintenance staff employed exclusively in my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's official residence.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also has the use of Dorneywood, which is a Trust property available for use by Ministers.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much he has paid to *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Westminster city council in backdated council tax for his official residence at Admiralty House. [54540]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend made a payment of £3,830.52 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to cover the council tax payments made on his official residence at Admiralty House from 16 May 1997 until 31 March 2005. He has also made a voluntary payment of £2,862.52 to Westminster city council, equivalent to the second home discount that had been claimed on his official residence at Admiralty House over the same period. My right hon. Friend has directed that from 1 April 2005, the council tax bill on his official residence at Admiralty House should be personally addressed and sent direct to him.

Park Home Pitch Fees

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will use his powers under the Housing Act 2004 to publish draft regulations to amend provisions for the regulation of park home pitch fees. [59049]

Yvette Cooper: The Government introduced several park home provisions in the Housing Act 2004, which came into force on 18 January 2005. These implement some of the key recommendations of the Park Homes Working Party. The provisions in the Act also allow us to insert further amendments to the Implied Terms and we expect to lay the first order in the next few months, to come into force in October 2006.

Parks

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* residential parks and *(b)* urban green spaces have been created since 1997. [60447]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect centrally information on the numbers of new parks and green spaces created.

Pathfinder

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the expenditure on consultants in the Pathfinder areas to date. [56097]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally. However, pathfinders will spend less than £90 million of revenue in their first two years. While this may fund some consultancy, it will mainly cover their staff and running costs, some staff in local authorities, community consultation, neighbourhood management and other activities.

Planning Appeals (Wycombe)

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful appeals have been made against planning decisions made by Wycombe district council in each year since 1999. [60890]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* A breakdown of the number of planning appeals determined by the Planning Inspectorate for Wycombe district council in each year since 1999 is given in the following table. It shows the number of appeals allowed *(a)*, dismissed *(b)*, the total number of appeals received and the percentage of successful appeals.

	Number or appeals allowed (a)	*Number of appeals dismissed (a)*	*Total number of appeals*	*Percentage of appeals allowed*
1999	30	43	73	41
2000	15	34	49	31
2001	24	36	60	40
2002	21	41	62	34
2003	20	55	75	27
2004	32	54	86	37
2005	33	89	122	27

Planning Procedure

Robert Key: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to change the circular 18/84 planning procedure for development of Crown land; and if he will make a statement. [60742]

Yvette Cooper: Development by Crown bodies will continue to be undertaken under the arrangements set out in Part IV of the Memorandum to DOE Circular 18/84 until the provisions to remove Crown immunity in Part 7 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 are implemented. We shall make an announcement on this in due course.

PPS3 (Aviation Industry)

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the proposed changes to Planning Policy Statement 3 on the aviation industry; and if he will make a statement. [60810]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Southport (Dr. Pugh) on 20 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 67W, and to the hon. Member for Vale of York (Miss McIntosh) on 22 March 2006, *Official Report,* columns 401–02W.

Regional Spatial Strategies

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what mechanism there is within each regional spatial strategy to assess the demand for *(a)* housing for inward migrants and *(b)* retirement housing. [57364]

Yvette Cooper: As part of developing proposals for the level and distribution of housing provision in their regional spatial strategies, regions are expected to take into account a range of factors including the Government's latest household projections. These are based on the Office for National Statistics' sub-national population projections, which include assumptions for the number of future migrants based upon recent trends.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, requires local authorities to assess local housing need, including the needs of the elderly, as part of preparing plan policies. Draft Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, consultation on which closed on 27 February, proposes that regions may set out in regional spatial strategies the approach to achieving an appropriate mix of household types to meet need and demand, which could include the needs of the elderly where appropriate. We are aiming to publish PPS3 before the Summer Recess.

Retrospective Planning Applications

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has further to discourage retrospective planning applications; and if he will assess the merits of levying a large fee for the submission of such applications. [60435]

Yvette Cooper: We are currently reviewing the planning enforcement system in England. One of the issues we are considering is the role retrospective planning applications have in legitimising unauthorised development and the question of fees for them.

Right-to-Buy

Andrew Stunell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the capital receipts from right to buy were in each year since 1997, broken down by local authority area. [60949]

Yvette Cooper: Figures for the right-to-buy capital receipts in each year since 1998–99 by local authority area can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website (http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/383/Table648Excel545Kb_id1156383.xls). Information is available only for the years shown.

Social Landlords

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the registered social landlords participating in each Pathfinder scheme. [60123]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows the registered social landlords that the pathfinders are working with in their areas.

Table 1: Pathfinders and their RSL partners

Pathfinder	*RSL*
Birmingham Sandwell	Black country Housing Group, Family housing Association and Midland Heart Housing Association.
East Lancashire	Accent, Calico, Manchester Metropolitan, Places for People and Twin Valleys.
Hull and East Riding	Chevin Housing Association, Places for People and South Yorkshire Housing Association.
Manchester Salford	Adactus Housing Association, Contour Housing Group Irwell Valley Housing Association, Manchester Methodist Housing Group, Mosscare, Northern Counties, Eastlands, The Sutton Trust, Space New Living and William Sutton Housing trust.
Merseyside	Adactus, Arena, Cosmopolitan, Crossby, Family Housing Association, Greater Hornby Housing Association, Liverpool Housing Trust, Maritime, Peirhead, Plus Group, Riverside Housing, Rodeny Servite, Venture Housing Association, Wirral Methodist and Wirral Partnership.
Newcastle Gateshead	Anchor Housing Association, Enterprise 5, Home Group and People for Places.
North Staffordshire	Aspire Housing Limited, Bentilee Community Housing Limited, Beth Johnson Housing Association, Manchester Methodists, Potteries Housing Association, Staffordshire Housing Association Limited, Touchstone Housing Association and William Sutton Housing Association.
Oldham Rochdale	Bowlee Park Housing Association, First Choice Homes Limited, The Guinness Trust, Manchester Methodist Housing Association, Northern Counties Housing Association, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Limited, St. Vincents Housing Association, Villages Housing Association and West Pennines.
South Yorkshire	Arches Housing, Chevin Housing Association, Equity Housing Association, Manchester Methodists, Nashayman Housing Association, Northern Counties Housing Association, Places for People, Sadeh Lok and South Yorkshire Housing Association.

Standards Board for England

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for how long members of the Standards Board for England are appointed; and who appoints them. [55356]

Mr. Woolas: Under section 57 of the Local Government Act 2000 members of the Standards Board for England are appointed by the Secretary of State. The usual period for which members are appointed is three years, with the possibility of reappointment for a further three year period. However, some current members of the Board have been appointed or reappointed for periods of less than three years, to ensure a phased replacement process for members.

Stock Transfers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much public money has been provided in the form of gap funding for stock transfers in each year since 1997; and how much his Department expects to provide in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08. [58877]

Yvette Cooper: The following figures are the sums paid or expected to be paid to registered social landlords in gap funding grant:

	£ million
2004–05	7.65
2005–06	1.83
2006–07	[1]57.679
2007–08	[1]96.422

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities have chosen as their preferred option for housing stock *(a)* retention, *(b)* transfer, *(c)* an arm's length management organisation and *(d)* a mix of those options. [58938]

Yvette Cooper: Of the 354 local housing authorities:

(a) 98 have opted to retain their stock;

(b) 185 have opted to transfer their stock to a registered social landlord (RSL);

(c) 60 have opted to establish an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) covering their whole stock;

(d) 8 have opted for a mixed solution of one or more of the above options.

Three local authorities have yet to submit an Options Appraisal.

A list of local authorities and their chosen delivery routes has been placed in the Library of the House.

Sustainable Buildings

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the membership of the senior steering group for the Code for Sustainable Buildings. [54686]

Yvette Cooper: The Senior Steering Group for the Code for Sustainable Home is chaired by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and consists of:

Anne Power—London School of Economics

David Pretty—Barratt Group

Ian Coull—Slough Estates

June Barnes—East Thames Housing Group

Michael Ankers—Construction Products Association

Peter Rogers—Stanhope Plc

In addition to this there are officials from ODPM and other government departments. There have also been wide ranging consultations with other stakeholders. The Environment Agency has also been invited to join the senior steering group.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether the Government plans to establish targets for the numbers of each different type and size of new house to be built in the Thames Gateway; [50199]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether sufficient housing is being provided within the Thames Gateway to meet the needs of families with children moving into that area. [51093]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities should set targets for the levels and mix of housing and affordable housing in their plans.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3) advises that assessments of housing need should be carried out to help authorities to identify where particular types of housing need to be provided for in development plan policies.

Walkergate (Durham)

Andrew Stunell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what factors underlay his decision to call in the proposed development on the old ice rink site in Walkergate, Durham; and if he will make a statement. [61225]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend's decision to call-in the application for housing and public realm development on the former ice rink site in Walkergate, Durham is contained in the Government Office's letter dated 16 February 2006. I have arranged for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House. The letter explains that the Secretary of State considers that the proposals may conflict with national policies on important matters and could raise significant architectural and urban design issues.

The hon. Member will understand that it would not be appropriate to make a statement about matters which will be the subject of a public inquiry by an independent inspector, who will report to the Secretary of State in due course. However, the letter identifies a number of important issues on which the Secretary of State particularly wishes the inspector to hear further evidence.

World Heritage Sites

David Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which minister in his Department has responsibility for issues relating to world heritage sites. [59102]

Yvette Cooper: Lead responsibility for policy on World Heritage Sites rests with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport works closely with relevant Government Departments on all issues affecting World Heritage Sites. Within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Baroness Andrews is Minister with responsibility for issues concerning World Heritage sites which fall within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy remit.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 28 March 2006

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Desalination

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* carbon dioxide output per cubic metre of desalination. [61308]

Mr. Morley: Desalination not been previously used as an option for water supply in the UK. Costs and emissions will be determined by the particulars of the operation concerned, for example, each will depend on whether brackish or sea water is involved; the source of energy used; and whether or not the plant is used continuously or to meet peak demands.

Projections from South East Water, who are constructing a small desalination plant on the South coast, point to an energy consumption around 4.5–4.7 kWh per cubic metre of water produced, using energy from a combined heat and power plant. The company has also estimated, in its business plan for the Periodic Review of water prices in 2004, that the cost will be around 47 p per cubic metre.

Flooding

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with Treasury colleagues on the overall sum available to her Department for flood defence works. [61242]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Defra has policy responsibility for flood risk management in England, funds most of the Environment Agency's flood related work and grant aids individual projects undertaken by local authorities and internal drainage boards. The programme to manage risk is driven by the operating authorities; Defra does not build defences, nor direct the authorities on which specific projects to undertake.

Funding is allocated to different priorities within the full range of Departmental responsibilities from the overall allocation for the Department set in the Government's regular Spending Reviews. The 2004 Review set spending limits for 2005–06 to 2007–08. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007 will set allocations for 2008–09 to 2010–11. The level of spending on flood risk management is being considered as part of this, as is the level of the Department's spend across all areas.

We are committed to the effective management of flood and coastal erosion risk and have increased funding significantly in recent years. In cash terms funding from central and local government has doubled from £307 million in 1996–97 to an estimated outturn of £600 million in 2005–06, a real terms increase of 40 per cent. after inflation.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the *(a)* Environment Agency and *(b)* other operating authorities allocated to flood risk prevention measures for the Suffolk coast and its tidal rivers in each year since 2003–04. [56926]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the principal operating authority with responsibility for flood risk management in England and has allocated the following sums for flood risk measures on the Suffolk coast and its tidal rivers:

£000

	Capital	*Maintenance*
2003–04	775	365
2004–05	764	826
2005–06[1]	4,582	380
2006–07[1]	4,032	700

[1] Forecast.

The aforementioned figures exclude costs in producing strategy plans but include design costs for works.

Waveney district council is promoting a £5 million capital improvement project at Southwold with funding from DEFRA which will provide protection from both flooding and coastal erosion. The latest estimate of spend is £2.3 million in 2005–06 and £3.4 million in 2006–07.

Figures for other measures by local authorities for flood (as opposed to coastal erosion) risk management on the Suffolk coast and its tidal rivers are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list flood protection projects *(a)* undertaken, *(b)* under way and *(c)* proposed for the Suffolk coast in each year since (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2006–07, including those which have not yet been approved by her Department; and in each case what the (A) estimated cost is and (B) threshold score is, calculated on the basis of the priority scoring system. [56928]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency's improvement programme for the Suffolk coast is shown as follows. The Agency considers some projects will be exempt from DEFRA's priority scoring requirement because of the Government's legal obligation to protect environmental sites of international importance. The need for such works has to be agreed with English Natur[illegible]Natural England) for individual cases. Felixstowe Ferry Sea Defences and Bawdsey Sea Defences are being promoted with levy funding from local authorities rather than DEFRA grant in aid and are not therefore subject to DEFRA's priority scoring requirement.

Projects often span several years, particularly when advance feasibility and design work is taken into account, so it is not possible to allocate projects to specific years. Instead expenditure in each year has been shown.

			Cost (£000)			
Project	*Status*	*Priority score*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Later years*
Felixstowe Manor Wall	Undertaken	28.5	324	12	—	—
Felixstowe Ferry Sea Defences	Undertaken/under way	15	—	100	425	—
Ipswich Horseshoe Sluice	Undertaken	22	—	35	58	—
Southwold Easton Bavents	Underway	27.3	143	62	664	590
Felixstowe Coastal Defences	Proposed	28.5	24	68	76	3,555
Blyth Walls	Proposed	[1]—	—	—	10	1,410
Minsmere Sea Defences	Proposed	[1]—	83	83	107	850
Easton Broad	Proposed	[1]—	122	92	99	610
Deben Walls	Proposed	[1]—	—	—	—	1,180
Aide Walls	Proposed	[1]—	—	—	—	2,200
Ipswich Tidal Defences	Proposed	20	—	79	102	8,300
Aldeburgh—Slaughden	Proposed	19.5	30	119	116	1,470
Bawdsey Sea Defences	Proposed	10.1	60	200	60	1,500
Kessingland to Benacre Sea Defences	Proposed	10	30	45	—	435
Orwell Walls	Proposed	[1]—	—	—	—	490
Walberswick to Dunwich	Proposed	[1]—	—	—	28	800
Sizewell Sea Defences	Proposed	—	—	—	—	200
Southwold The Denes	Proposed	17.4	—	—	—	250

[1] Exempt.

The Department has not been notified that projects are being promoted by any other operating authorities.

Freshwater Biological Association Library/ Kritsch Collection

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* the National Environment Research Council, *(b)* the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and *(c)* the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the implications for environmental protection of the decision to withdraw funding from the Freshwater Biological Association Library and the Kritsch Collection. [60365]

Margaret Beckett: *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). I have had no discussions with *(a)* the National Environment Research Council, *(b)* the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and *(c)* the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the implications for environmental protection of the decision to withdraw funding from the Freshwater Biological Association Library and the Kritsch Collection, because decisions on the merits of the funding of specific research areas are a matter for NERC.

Household Appliances

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government plan to introduce rules to regulate the amount of energy that can be used by electrical household appliances in *(a)* standby and *(b)* no load mode. [61046]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The Government are committed to raising product standards, including the energy used by appliances.

Mandatory standards for appliances are set at EU level. The new Eco-Design for Energy Using Products Framework Directive provides a route for setting such requirements, and we are pressing for stand-by power to be a priority area for action. Our Market Transformation Programme (MTP) has also been working to promote other measures: for example, an EU-wide voluntary agreement means that the majority of new televisions sold in the UK now consume around 1 watt of power in stand-by mode rather than the 3–8 watts consumed by older models. Discussions are now under way to extend this agreement to cover other consumer electronics.

The Budget also announced a new initiative, in partnership with major retailers and the Energy Saving Trust, to introduce voluntary schemes in the retail sector which encourage the purchase of more energy efficient alternatives in consumer electronics.

Kyoto Protocol

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government is taking to meet its commitments on carbon reductions under the Kyoto Protocol; and if she will make a statement. [60451]

Mr. Morley: The UK expects to exceed by about 7 percentage points its Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. below base year levels by 2008–12. Latest available figures indicate that in 2004 UK greenhouse gas emissions were 14.6 per cent. lower than base year levels. The additional policies and measures to be introduced from the current review of the UK's Climate Change Programme will achieve further reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Operating and Financial Review

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was first informed by HM Treasury of the decision to abandon the Operating and Financial Review. [58249]

Margaret Beckett *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The Government took the collective decision in November 2005 to repeal the mandatory requirement on quoted companies to prepare an Operating and Financial Review (OFR) as contained in the OFR regulations so that they are required to prepare a Business Review instead, and I was consulted prior to the decision being taken.

Pollution

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the change has been in the level of *(a)* carbon dioxide emissions and *(b)* carbon dioxide emissions from (i) aviation and (ii) shipping from the UK since 1990. [60569]

Mr. Morley: According to latest Government statistics published in January 2006, total net carbon dioxide emissions (including removals by sinks) fell by 5.6 per cent. between 1990 and 2004. Over the same period, carbon dioxide emissions from domestic aviation have increased by an estimated 80 per cent. and carbon dioxide emissions from domestic shipping have decreased by an estimated 11 per cent. The figures presented in the following table do not include emissions from international aviation or international shipping which, according to rules agreed internationally, are estimated and recorded by the UK in its greenhouse gas inventory but are not counted in assessments of progress against international climate change targets.

UK, million tonnes carbon (MtC) equivalent	*1990*	*2004*	*Percentage change*
Total net carbon dioxide emissions (including removals by sinks)	161.5	152.5	-5.6
Carbon dioxide emissions from domestic aviation	0.35	0.63	+80
Carbon dioxide emissions from domestic shipping	1.12	1.0	-11

Sustainable Building

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the 2004–05 financial year. [58748]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra incorporates significant sustainable features in all major new buildings and refurbishment works that it undertakes. However, no energy self-generation or water recycling measures were installed during the financial year 2004–05.

Defra is implementing the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate which sets specific targets for reduction of water use per person per annum, and for sourcing electricity from renewable and self-generated sources.

In 2005–06 3.2 per cent. of the capital building programme budget has been committed to item *(a)* energy self-generation. No item *(b)* water recycling capital investment was made.

Water

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans the Government have to ensure adequate supplies of water to houses proposed under the Sustainable Communities Plan; [60106]

(2) what *(a)* assessment her Department has made of and *(b)* research has been conducted by her Department on the effect of the Sustainable Communities Plan on water supplies. [60112]

Mr. Morley: It is for the individual water companies concerned to consider the need for increasing provision of water in fulfilment of their statutory duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. They have 25 year water resource plans which seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. This forward planning framework exists to take account of factors such as the water supply and disposal infrastructure required to service significant new housing developments such as that proposed under the Sustainable Communities Plan. Water resources plans will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003.

ODPM and Defra jointly commissioned a major research project, 'A Sustainability Impact Study of Additional Housing Scenarios in England', to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of additional housing supply proposed by the Barker Review. As part of the project a nine-region model was developed to examine the relationship between housing supply and various environmental impacts, including land take, waste production, water use and energy use. The research indicated that the reaching the Government's ambition of 200,000 additional new houses would result in an additional demand of 12 million litres per day in 2016 above the 12,728 million litres/day in the baseline.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is on making water meters compulsory for new build domestic properties. [60107]

Mr. Morley: The Government's policy is that metering, with appropriate tariffs and protection for vulnerable groups, is a fair method of water charging. Household customers have the right to opt for a measured charge or to remain on an established unmeasured basis of charging while using water only for normal household purposes in their current home. Subject to those rights it is for water companies to decide in which circumstances to base their charges on metering and in which circumstances on another basis. All water companies choose to meter new homes.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment the Government have made of the demographics of households who have volunteered for water meters; [60109]

(2) what assessment the Government have made of the effect of compulsory water metering on *(a)* the water bills of families and *(b)* poorer socio-economic groups. [60111]

Mr. Morley: Before the introduction of the statutory free meter option, DETR commissioned and published Incidence Effects of Charging for Domestic Water and Sewerage Services' in June 1998. That project developed a model that calculated the distributional effects on households of changing water charging from a rateable value basis to alternative unmeasured and measured options. This showed that switching to alternative water charging systems created not only winners but also a large numbers of losers.

In December 2004 Defra published the 'cross-Government review of water affordability report'. That report showed the scope and scale of the water affordability issue, including the effects on lower income groups and pensioners. Following the recommendations of the report Defra is currently working with Ofwat, the Consumer Council for Water, and water companies to look at the effects on types of households of alternative methods of measured charging as part of a range of measured and unmeasured tariff options.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to review the licence fees and charges incurred under the Water Framework Directive by homeowners who install environmentally friendly heat pumps by means of Clear Skies grant. [60370]

Mr. Morley: Abstraction licences and discharge consents may be required for the operation of heat pumps, depending upon the exact configuration and operation of any given system. Controls on abstractions and discharges have been in place for many years under the Water Resources Act 1991.

The Environment Agency sets out charges for abstractions and discharges in charging schemes that are approved by Ministers on an annual basis. There are no plans to dispense with charges in relation to heat pumps installed under the Clear Skies grant scheme.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has carried out into the feasibility of creating a national grid of water pipes. [61646]

Mr. Morley: My Department has conducted no such research. The Environment Agency is the statutory body with a duty to manage water resources in England and Wales. As part of the Agency's management role it has national and regional water resource strategies, published in 2001, which set out the pressures over the next 25 years. The strategies indicated that a national water grid would suffer a number of drawbacks. These include that pipelines for long distance transfers are large and their construction may be disruptive, and that pumping can consume much energy and add to carbon emissions. The Agency is currently undertaking some further work to update its earlier conclusions.

Water companies have statutory duties to maintain water supplies. It is for them to plan the investment necessary to deliver their services, including the necessary financial provision, and it is for Ofwat, in the light of companies' plans, to secure that companies carry out and are able to finance their functions. Each water company operates its own network of water pipes, but I am not aware that water companies collectively are considering the establishment of a national grid of water pipes.

The merits of a water grid would be considered by Ministers if applications for planning and other consents came before them for determination.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information her Department collects on the charges levied on *(a)* domestic and *(b)* commercial consumers of (i) metered and (ii) unmetered supplies by each water and sewerage undertaking in each county of England. [60888]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* The Department does not collect information on the charges levied by water and sewerage undertakers in England. The Office of Water Services (Ofwat), the economic regulator of the water industry, collects information on the household and non-household charges made by the water and sewerage undertakers. This information is based on the areas that the companies serve rather than administrative counties.

Ofwat publishes information on charges in its annual "Tariff structures and charges report". Companies have recently sent out bills for 2006–07. Information for this charging year will be available in the 2006–07 report which will be published in April.

The following tables show water and sewerage companies' charges to households for 2005–06. The first table provides the average unmeasured household bill for this period charged by each water and sewerage undertaker. The second provides the average measured bill for this period charged by each water and sewerage undertaker.

Detailed information on companies' charges for non-household customers can be found in Ofwat's "Tariff structures and charges 2005–06 report" which is available in the Library of the House. Most non-household customers pay a charge calculated via a volumetric rate. Most water and sewerage undertakers also levy a fixed charge on their non-household customers according to the size of the meter that the customer has. This fixed charge varies from company to company.

Average unmeasured household bills—2005–06

£

	Water[1]	*Sewerage*	*Combined*
Water and sewerage companies			
Anglian	158	199	357
Dwr Cymru	153	199	352
Northumbrian	114	145	259
Essex and Suffolk (part Northumbrian)	159	—	—
Severn Trent	135	125	260
South West	177	323	500
Southern	109	202	311
Thames	155	103	258
United Utilities	139	157	296
Wessex	155	178	333
Yorkshire (including York)	133	145	278
Water only companies			
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	137	—	—
Bristol	133	—	—
Cambridge	115	—	—
Cholderton	158	—	—
Dee Valley	129	—	—
Folkestone and Dover	175	—	—
Mid Kent	156	—	—
Portsmouth	79	—	—
South East	163	—	—
South Staffs	105	—	—
Sutton and East Surrey	151	—	—
Tendring Hundred	204	—	—
Three Valleys (including North Surrey)	148	—	—

[1] Forecast.

Average measured household bills 2005–06

£

	Water[1]	Sewerage	Combined
Water and sewerage companies			
Anglian	116	147	263
Dwr Cymru	105	114	219
Northumbrian	94	124	218
Essex and Suffolk (part Northumbrian)	116	—	—
Severn Trent	113	118	231
South West	116	194	310
Southern	103	167	270
Thames	133	100	233
United Utilities	124	140	264
Wessex	116	133	249
Yorkshire (including York)	111	119	230
Water only companies			
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	114	—	—
Bristol	115	—	—
Cambridge	94	—	—
Cholderton	139	—	—
Dee Valley	89	—	—
Folkestone and Dover	127	—	—
Mid Kent	124	—	—
Portsmouth	80	—	—
South East	130	—	—
South Staffs	100	—	—
Sutton and East Surrey	114	—	—
Tendring Hundred	139	—	—
Three Valleys (including North Surrey)	122	—	—

[1] Forecast.

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the relevant water companies on ensuring water supply to homes in London and the South East in summer 2006; and if she will make a statement. [61305]

Mr. Morley: Water companies supplying London and the South East, in common with the other water companies, produce drought plans, which are now a statutory requirement as a result of changes introduced by the Water Act 2003. The drought plan sets out how the company will continue to meet its duty to maintain an adequate supply of water during a short term water shortage.

One of the actions may involve applying to my Department for drought orders to restrict non-essential uses of water. My officials have had discussions relating to water supplies, and possible drought orders, with Thames Water, Sutton and East Surrey Water, Southern Water, Mid Kent Water and South East Water.

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics Employment/Unemployment Trends

13. **Mr. MacDougall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the most recent Scottish employment rate. [60668]

14. **Ms Katy Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the most recent Labour Market statistics for Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [60669]

Mr. Darling: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave earlier today to questions 2, 3 and 7.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent assessment he has made of trends in employment and unemployment in Scotland. [60657]

Mr. Darling: The Scottish labour market is at its strongest position in decades with more people in work and fewer unemployed than ever before.

BCCI

15. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from local authorities that lost money in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International collapse of 1991. [60670]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has received no such representations.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59281]

David Cairns: There is no single definition of a small firm with terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (Small and Medium sized Enterprise) being used interchangeably. The Scotland Office uses definitions based on the European Commission recommendation of May 2003 and the Companies Act 1985.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Souvenir Shop (Fairtrade Products)

35. **Jo Swinson:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many products sold in the souvenir shop are Fairtrade products. [61517]

Nick Harvey: At present, the souvenir shop sells two ranges of ethically traded products: embossed leather goods and embroidered Christmas tree decorations. 95 per cent. of souvenirs sold in the House of Commons shops are produced in the UK.

Westminster Hall

36. **Mr. Evans:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission whether Westminster Hall is on schedule to be reopened on time; and if he will make a statement. [61518]

Nick Harvey: The building works are progressing satisfactorily and the Hall is currently on programme to re-open in early October at the end of the summer recess period as originally planned. The Hall has been closed since the beginning of the year to allow the reconstruction of the steps at the south end of the Hall to take place. General enabling works took place beneath the steps (to remove asbestos and secure building services) out of sight of visitors. Work has now

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

commenced inside the Hall including removal of the steps, flooring slabs and archaeological exploratory operations. The works may be viewed through windows inserted in the safety hoarding across the top of the steps at St. Stephens entrance.

Bottled Water

Mr. Spellar: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if the Commission will arrange for jugs of water to be provided in committee and meeting rooms as a replacement for or alternative to bottled water. [60177]

Nick Harvey: The Administration Committee considered a suggestion that tap water be provided in place of bottled water in committee and meeting rooms at its meeting on 17 January 2006 and decided to take no action. Further consideration is being given to the provision of water in committee and meeting rooms.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Calendar

37. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has to review the parliamentary calendar. [61519]

Nigel Griffiths: There are no present plans for a formal review of the parliamentary calendar, although my right hon. Friend is always open to representations on this as on other matters.

Capita Group

Chris Grayling: To ask the Leader of the House how much business his office has placed with *(a)* Capita Group plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries in each of the last five years; what the total value is of outstanding contracts placed with Capita Group plc and its subsidiaries by his office; for which current tenders issued by his Office (i) Capita Group plc and (ii) its subsidiaries have been invited to bid; and whether (A) Capita Group plc and (B) its subsidiaries have seconded staff (1) temporarily and (2) on a longer-term basis to his office. [61068]

Nigel Griffiths: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons has used the Capita Group once within the last five years. The details are set out as follows. There are no outstanding contracts or current tenders issued by my office to Capita Group or its subsidiaries and no staff from Capita have been seconded to the office.

Capita Business Services Ltd.

Service—one-off instant recruitment	*Cost (£)*
November 2003	910.63

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Efficiency Targets

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the Civil Service workforce reductions targets for his Office set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Office set out in the Review. [52797]

The Solicitor-General: The Treasury Solicitor's Department's target is 36 by 31 March 2008, assuming a constant level of business activity. When fully implemented, associated savings in a full year will be £900,000. These savings achieved will count towards the TSol's efficiency target in Spending Review 2004.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Service[1], Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, Crown Prosecution Service, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and the Serious Fraud Office do not have workforce reductions targets.

[1] RCPO came into existence after the Spending Review 2004 workforce reduction targets were set but the target (10 equating to £400,000) for its predecessor (the Customs and Excise Prosecutions Office) had already been met.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General what total efficiency savings were achieved by the Law Officers' Departments in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for the Departments set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52861]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service achieved £20.5 million efficiency savings in 2004–05, which contributed early progress towards the Department's agreed efficiency savings target set out in the 2004 Spending Review.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office was not established 18 April 2005 but the headcount target (10) set for its predecessor, the Customs and Excise Prosecutions Office, was achieved in 2004–05.

The Treasury Solicitor's Department[1] achieved efficiency savings of £0.6 million in 2004–05 and these sums will continue during the 2004 Spending Review period, contributing to the Department's Spending Review target.

The Serious Fraud Office did not have an efficiency targets in 2004–05.

[1] Including the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

Sexual Harassment

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases of sexual harassment were brought in which the defendant was subsequently acquitted of all charges in the last year for which figures are available. [61566]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) holds no discrete record of proceedings for sexual harassment. The term comprises a range of different behaviours, some of them representing offences under the criminal law while others are covered by various provisions of the civil law.

With effect from September 2004, CPS sources provide a record of the number of defendants prosecuted for sexual offences, and of the outcome of proceedings. The table shows these figures for the last two years; however, the figures comprise all prosecutions for sexual offences, not just those for harassment. The table shows, together with the number and proportion of defendants acquitted, those whose case did not proceed, and those whose case resulted in conviction.

Proceedings for sexual offences

	2004–05[1]		2005–06[2]	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Prosecution did not proceed	1,211	20.9	2,307	20.6
Acquitted at trial	966	16.6	1,819	16.3
Total unsuccessful outcomes	2,777	37.5	4,126	36.9
Convicted	3,625	62.5	7,065	63.1
Total	5,802		11,191	

[1] September 2004 to March 2005

[2] April 2005 to 22 March 2006

TRANSPORT

A1073

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if officials from his Department will meet officers of Lincolnshire county council and Peterborough city council to resolve issues regarding the funding and progress in respect of the A1073 Spalding to Eye improvement scheme; and if he will make a statement. [61255]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* We are considering the issues relating to the funding of this scheme and will make an announcement in due course.

A3

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the cost implications of the time scale for making a decision on the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme. [61537]

Dr. Ladyman: The scheme is currently being programmed for implementation by the Highways Agency, and the costs estimated, on the assumption of a start of construction in 2008–09. The timing of a decision to proceed within this timescale would, therefore, have no implications for scheme costs.

A588

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic *(a)* accidents and *(b)* fatalities there have been on the A588 in Lancaster and Wyre since 2000. [61320]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of personal injury road accidents and resulting fatalities on the A588 in Lancaster and Wyre constituency from 2000–04 (the latest year for which figures are available) are given in the following table. The figures in the table are those that occurred in the 2004 boundary for Lancaster and Wyre constituency.

	Accidents	Fatalities
2000	34	0
2001	45	0
2002	47	3
2003	47	1
2004	41	3

Airport Ownership

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there are EU restrictions on UK companies owning airports in other member states; and if he will make a statement. [61333]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

There are no specific provisions in EU law concerning the ownership of airports. Any acquisitions involving changes in ownership of airports would be subject to the applicable merger control law. Acquisitions may only be restricted or prevented in accordance with the applicable law. The EU treaty provides for the free movement of capital between EU member states. EU states may not adopt measures that are incompatible with their EU treaty obligations.

British Airports Authority

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the ownership of airports operated by the British Airports Authority. [60167]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made to the House by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 20–21WS, on the Government's response to the Civil Aviation Authority's price control review consultation.

Bus Services

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of road congestion on the reliability of bus services outside London. [60700]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not commissioned research of this kind. However, it will be publishing later this year the results of a national survey of bus punctuality.

Local transport authorities are required to monitor bus punctuality as part of the Local Transport Plan process. They and bus operators are encouraged to form Punctuality Improvement Partnerships to address issues of poor punctuality due to factors such as traffic congestion.

Cyclists

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of cyclists who use the railway network daily in each region; what action he is taking to encourage more cyclists to make part of their longer journeys by train; what improvements in facilities for cyclists using the rail network are planned; and if he will make a statement. [61113]

Derek Twigg: Data are not collected in the form requested.

Each train operating company (TOC) is responsible for both their policy on the carriage of bikes on trains and the provision of cycle parking at stations.

The Government have adopted the Cycling Policy document produced in 2004 by the Strategic Rail Authority. This encourages all TOCs to carry folding bikes at all times, to carry non folding bikes wherever possible, while recognising that in peak periods there may be circumstances where it is in the best interests of the majority of passengers not to do so. The policy recommends that TOCs provide sufficient cycle parking at stations so that 95 per cent. of all rail journeys start from a station with adequate cycle parking by 2009. To support this policy the DfT recently funded an additional 2,900 cycle parking spaces at stations where demand exceeded capacity.

The franchise replacement process provides an opportunity to improve cycle facilities at stations, and to address the requirements of cyclists who wish to use trains. Bidders for the imminent South Western franchise will be asked to consider cycle-rail integration matters in their bid submissions.

As part of our ongoing commitment to bike and rail journeys I am discussing with our advisory body on cycling, Cycling England how we might further encourage such journeys.

Harbours Bill

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of the provisions contained in the Harbours Bill. [60277]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government's position in respect of the Harbours Bill was set out by my noble Friend Baroness Crawley during the Second Reading debate in the House of Lords on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1382–85. We support the principle of the Bill which we believe would make a useful contribution to our policy of streamlining planning, and planning related, procedures.

Highways Agency

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Article 14 directions relating to planning permissions have been issued by the Highways Agency in Northamptonshire since 1997. [60653]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2006]*: An Article 14 Direction is any type of formal restrictive response given by the Secretary of State for Transport to a planning application, be it refusal, conditions on approval, or restricting grant of permission.

The current database for monitoring Article 14 directions does not contain this information prior to 2003. Since 2003, the Highways Agency has issued the following Article 14 directions relating to planning applications in Northamptonshire.

	Total
Planning application consultations received	368
Directions of refusal	5
Directions of conditions on approval	28
Directions restricting grant of permission	7

Directions restricting the grant of permission (holding directions) direct that planning permission not be granted, usually for a specified period of six months or less. These directions are usually imposed where developers have not provided sufficient information for the Agency to assess the impact of their proposals on the trunk road network.

Directions restricting the grant of permission are only recorded if extant. Such directions are superseded on the monitoring system by the final response. This final response may be refusal, conditions on approval, or consent.

Analysis shows that five directions of refusal were made, with details as follows:

Site	*Date of direction*	*Reason for direction*	*Development*
Heart of the Shires, Norton	4 April 2004	Road safety	Golf academy
Land adjacent to the Coach House, Dodford	18 August 2005	Road safety	Residential development
Land adjacent to Knotwood Fields Farm, Stratford	6 December 2005	Insufficient information	Telecom mast
Brackley Sawmills	26 January 2006	Insufficient information	Business park
Tesco, Carina Road, Kettering	6 March 2006	Insufficient information	Retail extension

The three applications refused due to insufficient information arose from the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2005, which came into force on 24 August 2005. This Order requires statutory consultees to respond within 21 days, provided that sufficient information is available to provide a substantive response. In each of these cases the local planning authority has acknowledged that insufficient information has been submitted with the application, and has requested that the Highways Agency direct refusal in order that they might determine the application within their statutory deadlines.

Seven directions restricting the grant of permission are extant, with details as follows:

Site	*Reason for direction*	*Likely resolution*
Priors Hall, Corby	Insufficient information	Not yet known
Ransome Road, Northampton	Insufficient information	Not yet known
Nunn Mills, Northampton	Insufficient information	Not yet known
A509 Isham Bypass	Insufficient information	Consent
Faccenda Abattoir, Brackley	Insufficient information	Conditions on approval
St. Mark's Road, Corby	Insufficient information	Application possibly withdrawn
Weldon Park, Corby	Insufficient information	Application to be withdrawn (advised by Corby BC)

Homeland Security

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what rehearsals have taken place to prepare for a terrorist attack on *(a)* the Merseyrail in Liverpool and *(b)* the Tyne and Wear Metro in Newcastle. [60530]

Derek Twigg: Merseytravel, with its partners at Merseyrail Electrics, the local police and other emergency services undertake exercises to ensure preparedness for a terrorist attack. They are working with the Department to implement the lessons learnt from the last exercise in January 2006.

The Tyne and Wear Metro took part in a series of desk top exercises in 2005 involving emergency evacuation in restricted access locations. The exercises were co-ordinated by the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit and involved Network Rail and all five local authorities in Tyne and Wear.

Local Transport Plans

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what circumstances Government funding may be *(a)* withheld and *(b)* reduced when a local authority has failed to consult properly on the introduction of a local transport plan. [61605]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The effectiveness of consultation and involvement of stakeholders is one of the criteria against which the quality of local transport plans will be assessed. The overall assessment of the Plan will influence integrated transport allocations for the years 2007–08 to 2010–11.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultation a local authority is required to carry out before introducing a local transport plan. [61606]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Advice to local authorities on consultation was included in the "Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans" issued in December 2004, available on the DfT website: www.dft.gov.uk

Office of the Rail Regulator

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what mechanisms are in place to ensure the independence of the Office of the Rail Regulator from *(a)* Government and *(b)* private companies. [61181]

Derek Twigg: The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) is the independent regulator of the rail industry in Great Britain.

The ORR is required to make its decisions on the basis of a range of public interest duties set out in UK and European Union legislation. Any party who believes ORR has not acted in accordance with its statutory duties can seek a review by the courts.

A further safeguard of ORR's independence is that it is a statutory board appointed by the Secretary of State in consultation with the chairman. Members must be appointed or removed in accordance with statutory criteria. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I have given to the hon. Member for Stroud today (UIN 60600).

Railways

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many penalty fare schemes on trains have been suspended under Rule 13 of the Penalty Fares Rules; and what the reason was for each suspension. [61205]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport has not had to suspend a penalty fares scheme under Rule 13.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list railway stations which do not have *(a)* waiting rooms, *(b)* toilets and *(c)* disabled access, broken down by train operating company. [61739]

Derek Twigg: Information on the facilities available at individual stations is available at www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on capacity on the East Coast Main Line. [60840]

Derek Twigg: A large number of representations have been received from organisations and individuals, both within the railway industry and outside, about the allocation of capacity on the East Coast Main Line.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with GNER on the East Coast main line franchise. [60985]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2403W.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive on the East Coast main line franchise. [61157]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The Secretary of State has had no recent meetings with the Scottish Executive on the East Coast Main Line franchise.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact of EU Directive 2004/49/EC on heritage railways; and if he will make a statement. [61152]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* I laid before Parliament on 17 March 2006 the proposed Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations (ROGS) which implement the safety management aspects of EU Directive 2004/49/EC. An explanatory memorandum, transposition note and regulatory impact assessment for all sectors of the railway, including heritage railways, accompany the proposed regulations. A copy has been placed in the House Library.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how regularly inspections are made by HM Railway Inspectorate of fencing along the Swansea Relief line in Morriston; and whether recent recommendations have been made for action by Network Rail as a result of such inspections. [60805]

Derek Twigg: The Health and Safety Executive's HM Railway Inspectorate (HMRI) has no programme for the regular inspection of fencing in the Morriston area of Swansea and has made no recommendations to

Network Rail about fencing in this area. However, HMRI would expect Network Rail's risk assessment to consider the maintenance of fencing as a means of reducing the risks associated with trespass.

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which rail operators are required under their franchise to pay a premium to Government on profits above a threshold; how many payments have been paid to the Government under these requirements; and by which operators such payments were made. [59871]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The Department for Transport currently manages 21 franchise agreements. The following 13 operators are required to pay a premium on profits above a threshold: Arriva Trains Wales, Central Trains, Chiltern Railways, First Great Western Link, Island Line, Midland Mainline, Silverlink, South West Trains, Southern, Thameslink, Transpennine Express, WAGN and Wessex Trains.

Such premiums have been received from seven operators: Central Trains, Island Line, Silverlink, South West Trains, Thameslink, WAGN and Wessex Trains.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what terms and conditions apply to curtailment of the contract for the rail regulator. [60600]

Derek Twigg: Under the terms of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, a regulatory board superseded the post of rail regulator on 5 July 2004. The Office of Rail Regulation consists of a chairman and at least four other members appointed by the Secretary of State.

The chairman or another member may not be appointed for a term of more than five years (but may be reappointed), may resign by notice in writing to the Secretary of State and shall hold and vacate office in accordance with the terms of his appointment.

The Secretary of State may dismiss a member of the office by notice in writing on the grounds that the member:

(a) has been absent from meetings of the office without permission of the office during a period of more than three months,

(b) has a financial or other personal interest which is likely to influence the performance of his functions as a member,

(c) is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order (or interim order),

(d) has had his estate sequestrated in Scotland or, under Scots law, has made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, his creditors,

(e) has misbehaved, or

(f) is unable, unfit or unwilling to perform his functions as a member.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much subsidy his Department has paid to *(a)* the St. Ives Bay Line, *(b)* the Tamar Valley Line, *(c)* the St. Albans Abbey Branch, *(d)* the Grantham-Skegness Line, *(e)* the Penistone Line, and *(f)* the Esk Valley Line in each of the last five years. [61213]

Derek Twigg: Where services are subsidised as part of a franchise, the subsidy is not broken down on a line-by-line basis. The information is therefore not available in the form requested.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on marketing strategies by his Department to promote increased passenger volume on *(a)* the St. Ives Bay Line, *(b)* the Looe Valley Line, *(c)* the Tamar Valley Line (Plymouth-Gunnislake), *(d)* the St. Albans Abbey Branch, *(e)* the Grantham-Skegness Line, *(f)* the Penistone Line and *(g)* the Esk Valley Line in each of the last five years. [61217]

Derek Twigg: The marketing of railway services is the responsibility of train operating companies. The Department does not therefore hold information on spending in this area.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce rail journey times between Polegate and Lewes and London. [61254]

Derek Twigg: The Brighton Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy, recently published, proposed that rail journey times from East Sussex to London would be improved by means of eliminating the practice of splitting and joining trains at Haywards Heath. A programme for implementation of the RUS recommendations is now being prepared.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what rules apply to the provision of air conditioning on new railway rolling stock. [61243]

Derek Twigg: There is no requirement to fit air conditioning on trains. The general requirements for ventilation of passenger areas and cabs on trains are covered in part 2f, sections 192 to 197 of the Railway Safety Principles and Guidelines published by Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate.

If air conditioning equipment is fitted, there are standards which ensure that, in an emergency, adequate ventilation is provided and, should a fire occur, there is the opportunity to evacuate the vehicle safely. These are set out in the Association of Train Operating Companies' Good Practice Guides 003 and 004 and in standards GM RT 2120 (a Railway Group Standard) and AV/ST 9002 (an Association of Train Operating Companies standard).

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce electricity consumption of new railway rolling stock. [61259]

Derek Twigg: The Department is taking forward a range of initiatives to reduce electricity consumption—and energy consumption more generally—from new rolling stock. These include enabling the wider use of regenerative braking on electric trains, which can offer electricity consumption savings of around 20 per cent., and working with the manufacturers and operators to trial hybrid train technology. The Department is also working with the rail industry to identify measures to reduce the weight of new trains which has a key impact on energy consumption.

Road Building

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list each motorway and trunk road building project undertaken since 1997; and what the *(a)* tender cost and *(b)* outturn cost was in each case. [62182]

Dr. Ladyman: A table listing works tender cost against works outturn cost for each publicly funded major project completed, since 1997 has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Road Congestion

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what mechanisms are in place to measure congestion on the road network; and if he will make a statement. [61114]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on congestion data sources, indicators and targets is contained in the document "Congestion on the strategic road network: 2004–05 target baseline figure and methodology" at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_611157.pdf and "Technical Notes for Spending Review 2004 PSA Targets" at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/pdf/dft_about_pdf_030578.pdf (sections PSA Target 1 and PSA Target 4). For the target on urban congestion (PSA 4) the Technical Note is provisional and we expect to set final targets in July 2006.

Road Humps

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has conducted on the impact on road casualties of the removal of road humps. [61509]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not conducted any specific research into the impact on road casualties of the removal of road humps. However, research does show road humps can achieve significant reductions in vehicle speeds, and that a 1 mph reduction in average speed can reduce accident risk by 5 per cent.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will commission research into the cost of removing all road humps in England. [61659]

Dr. Ladyman: No.

Road Improvement Costs

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake) of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2318–2319W, on road improvement costs, how much compensation has been paid under part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 in each case; and what other costs in each case have been incurred by the Highways Agency which are not paid to the scheme contractor. [61750]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest agreed budget costs for schemes in the TPI, represent the current approved estimate of the full outturn costs and include land acquisition and compensation, VAT and the cost of statutory undertaker diversions in addition to payments to the contractor/designer.

No compensation has yet been paid under part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973, in relation to any of the projects listed. This is because such compensation can only be claimed from one year after road opening, and none of the schemes listed have reached this stage.

Transport (East Croydon)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve network capacity around East Croydon. [61253]

Derek Twigg: Future plans for network enhancements will be determined in the High Level Output Specification for the railway to be published in summer 2007. Network Rail is also about to commence the South London Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) which will inform this process and investment decisions.

Additional passenger carrying capacity in the Croydon area is being progressed as part of the implementation of the Brighton Mainline RUS and as part of other projects such as the East London line extension to West Croydon.

Transport Forecasts

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department will take steps against planners and forecasters who consistently and foreseeably produce erroneous transport forecasts; and if he will make a statement. [61598]

Dr. Ladyman: The forecasts used to establish the design and the value for money of transport schemes are made by the sponsors of the schemes following guidance provided by the Department. We monitor the accuracy of transport forecasts and issue guidance to address factors which lead to inaccurate forecasts. The forecasts supporting bids for funding are scrutinised carefully by the Department. Those which do not follow the Department's guidelines or which appear to be biased are routinely challenged, leading to revisions in the analysis before funding is agreed.

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Vehicle and Operator Services Agency test stations are owned by the Government; what the location of each station is; how many tests each conducted in the last 12 months; and what the estimated value of each test station is. [61740]

Dr. Ladyman: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency owns 68 testing stations by way of freehold ownership, 19 by way of long ground leases and two by way of short ground leases.

A table has been placed in the Libraries of the House which gives the information requested for each testing station operated by VOSA in the last financial year for which records are available.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Human Trafficking

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with the Home Secretary about improving the support and assistance given to the victims of trafficking who agree to help the authorities in a prosecution case against those who trafficked them. [60375]

Meg Munn: As a Member of the Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking, I work closely with Home Office colleagues to ensure that provision for victims is sensitive to women's needs.

The UK is sympathetic to the needs of victims of trafficking. The POPPY Scheme already provides a supporting and protective environment in which victims can receive care and support while deciding whether to assist the authorities.

We propose to increase the geographical coverage of support services for victims and introduce support at varying levels of intensity according to individual need. We will use the evaluation of the POPPY scheme and the responses to the consultation on the proposed UK Action Plan on human trafficking to inform our decisions on the nature and scope of future support.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with the Home Secretary about the number of victims of trafficking who have been brought into the United Kingdom to be sold into the vice trade. [60376]

Meg Munn: As a Member of the Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking, I work closely with Home Office colleagues to ensure that provision for victims is sensitive to women's needs.

We do not have the evidence base to enable us to estimate the number of trafficking victims brought into the UK to be sold into the vice trade. We are seeking more evidence of all human trafficking, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, as part of our current consultation on the proposed UK Action Plan on human trafficking. In that consultation, we state that we will publish research into the harms caused by organised immigration crime, including trafficking. This research will provide a better understanding of the trafficking problem faced in the UK and will be updated annually. This year we will commence a scoping exercise focused on trafficking and the off-street prostitution market.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what Government policy is on the marking and traceability of small arms and light weapons. [60939]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The UK remains committed to international criteria on marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons (SALW). This is key to tackling the problem of illicit trade in SALW. The UK played a lead role formulating a politically binding UN instrument on the marking and tracing of SALW that was finally adopted in June 2005. We continue to work towards making this instrument legally binding. The UK is fully compliant with strict EU marking and tracing standards.

Clearskies Programme

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the reasons were for the decision to withdraw the Clearskies grant programme; and if he will make a statement on the low carbon building plan that is due to replace it. [59481]

Malcolm Wicks: The Clearskies programme was originally a 3-year programme and was extended with extra funding for a further year to finish in March 2006. It has been completed rather than being withdrawn.

The Renewables Innovation Review (Feb 2004) recommended that the best way to support the installation of micro generation technologies would be through a technology blind low carbon buildings programme. The new low carbon buildings programme, which will start in April this year, will thus supersede both the Clearskies and Photovoltaics demonstration programmes. It will continue to offer grants for the installation of renewable technologies to both householders and larger organisations.

The new programme will seek to take a more holistic approach to energy consumption in buildings and will focus on energy efficiency measures as well as the installation of renewable technologies.

Consumer Direct

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department allocated to Consumer Direct across all regions in each year from 2004–05 to 2006–07; and what estimate he has made of the figure for 2007–08. [61019]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The total funding allocation for Consumer Direct over the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2008 is as follows:

	£ million
2004–05	[1]12.5
2005–06	[2]18.3
2006–07	[2]19.0
2007–09	[2]19.0

[1] Actual
[2] Forecast

Energy Policy

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much capital grant his Department spent on all micro renewables in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [60844]

Malcolm Wicks: Under the grants support programmes Clear Skies and the Photovoltaics Demonstration Programmes the following has been spent.

Financial year	*£*
2002–03	509,000
2003–04	3,101,771
2004–05	8,502,602
2005–06	9,448,551

Energy Suppliers (Disputes)

Jessica Morden: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made towards the final establishment of an alternative disputes resolution body to enable consumers to pursue disputes with energy suppliers. [61899]

Malcolm Wicks: In July 2005, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, which is responsible for the regulation of gas and electricity supply, instructed gas and electricity suppliers to establish, within a year, an independent body to deal with billing disputes that had not been resolved by standard complaints processes. Gas and electricity suppliers continue to work towards the establishment of such a body in July 2006, and are in discussion with the Office of the Telecommunications Ombudsman (OTELO) with a view to its providing this service under contract.

Heat and Power Field Trials

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the November 2005 Carbon Trust preliminary report on the Trust's micro-combined heat and power field trials; and if he will make a statement. [60886]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* The Carbon Trust's preliminary report on micro-combined heat and power provides interim results on extensive field trials, which are yet to complete. We are awaiting the final conclusions which should help to develop understanding on the low carbon potential of micro-combined heat and power.

iTrips

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the use of iTrips and similar devices; and if he will make a statement. [61542]

Alun Michael: I have received no representations on the use of iTrips and similar devices.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration he has given to the exemption of iTrips and similar devices from the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949; and if he will make a statement. [61543]

Alun Michael: None. Such regulations are the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom) which is accountable to Parliament rather than Ministers.

Low Carbon Buildings

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much low carbon buildings programme capital grant will be available in the first year of the programme. [60843]

Malcolm Wicks: Of the initial budget of £30 million, approximately £11 million will be available for grants across all streams of the programme during the first year of the programme. The scheme will be launched in April on this basis.

On 23 March the Budget 2006 announced an additional £50 million for the programme. The Department will be considering urgently with Treasury colleagues how this money should be allocated.

Microgeneration

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the systems compatibility of large base-load power generation plants with small-scale micro-generation power systems. [60618]

Malcolm Wicks: Issues relating to the compatibility of large generating plant and microgeneration are primarily a matter for the UK System Operator, National Grid. However, in 2004, the DTI in conjunction with Ofgem and National Grid established the Electricity Systems Technical Issues Steering Group to investigate the performance of the electricity networks given likely longer term changes in the UK generation portfolio and to ensure that any technical issues that might arise were recognised in good time. The group published an interim report, which can be found at www.dti.gov.uk/renewables/publications_pdfs/estiginterimreportfinal.pdf and is currently working with National Grid to undertake more detailed studies that should be completed late summer 2006.

Package Holidays

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have been refused insurance claim payments under regulation 15 of the Package Travel, Package Holidays, Package Tours Regulations Act 1992 since they were introduced. [61248]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Regulation 15 of the Package Travel, Package Holidays, Package Tours Regulations 1992 places responsibility on package holiday organisers for the satisfactory delivery of the package, including services provided by third party providers (hoteliers etc.), except in the circumstances set out, also in regulation 15. While this liability may not actually be set out in a contract, it is nevertheless implied in each contract for a package holiday. It is not an insurance policy. Consumers who remain dissatisfied having sought recompense from the organiser for failure to deliver the contracted services may have recourse to the civil courts.

The Government do not maintain statistics of requests to package holiday organisers for compensation, or of cases in the civil courts, relating to these provisions.

Pension Rights (Bankruptcy)

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the case of *(a)* insolvency and *(b)* bankruptcy or liquidation, how workers' pensions rank in priority for payment against payments to (i) shareholders, (ii) tax collecting authorities, (iii) staff, (iv) secured creditors and (v) unsecured creditors; and if he will make a statement. [61769]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The distribution of assets in insolvency proceedings follows an order of priority. There are three categories of creditor—secured, preferential and unsecured. In insolvencies commencing on or after 15 September 2003 (when the Crown gave up its right to claim unpaid taxes preferentially) the only amounts which may be claimed preferentially are amounts due in respect of recent unpaid wages and holiday pay, sums owed in respect of recent unpaid contributions to occupational pension schemes or state scheme premiums, and levies on coal and steel production.

Any shortfall on the realisation of property subject to a charge and amounts due to employees or pension schemes that is not preferential is unsecured. Generally speaking, unsecured creditors rank equally.

A return of capital to a shareholder can only be made if all the costs of the insolvency and all of the creditors have been paid in full, including statutory interest on their debts.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are using the Post Office card account to receive *(a)* pensions and *(b)* other benefits in (i) Lancaster and Wyre and (ii) Lancashire; and how many transactions there were in relation to such payments in each of the last two years. [61321]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

Information showing the number of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account for each parliamentary constituency has been placed in the Library.

The information on the actual number of transactions for payments made into a Post Office card account broken down for (i) Lancaster and Wyre and (ii) Lancashire is not available within DWP.

Renewable Energy

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department has allocated to renewable energy in the last five years. [61247]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI spend on renewable technologies for the five years from 2000–01 to 2004–05 is set out in the following table.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1990–91

Rounded to nearest thousand

	Spend				
Programme area	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Bio Wastes	56,000	13,000	42,000	259,000	—
Biomass	1,267,000	1,333,000	1,595,000	1,346,000	974,222
Embedded Generation	589,000	776,000	1,424,000	725,000	1,105,640
Fuel Cells	1,410,000	1,249,000	1,200,000	1,701,000	4,907,430
Geothermal—Aquifers	0	0	0	0	0
Geothermal—Hot Dry Rocks	0	0	0	0	0
Hydro	60,000	130,000	200,000	85,000	0
Solar	1,264,000	1,522,000	4,485,000	3,131,000	1,970,340
Tidal	27,000	305,000	1,996,000	2,914,000	1,268,530
Wave	331,000	662,000	748,000	2,104,000	—
Wind	913,000	1,248,000	1,428,000	1,395,000	1,459,600
Total	*5,917,000*	*7,238,000*	*13,118,000*	*13,660,000*	*11,685,762*

Notes:

1. From 2000–01, figures do not include spend on contracts placed direct by DTI.
2. For 2004–05, figures in italic show a combined spend for the two areas.
3. It has not been possible to collate expenditure on oil and gas research in the time available.

£

DTI capital grant programmes	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Biomass (DTI and Lottery spend)	—	10,000	1,913,000	*1,923,000*
Offshore Wind Capital Grants	—	0	15,000,000	*15,000,000*
Clear Skies Community Renewables	200,000	1,387,000	2,413,000	*3,800,000*
Major PV Demo Programme	960,000	2,880,000	6,450,000	*9,330,000*
Grand total	*1,160,000*	*4,277,000*	*25,776,000*	*30,053,000*

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

EU Hazardous Substances Directive

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on exempting *(a)* repair of organs and *(b)* construction of new organs from the implementation of the EU Directive on restrictions on hazardous substances. [61018]

Mr. Lammy: None. However, my officials are keeping in close touch with the Department of Trade and Industry officials who are leading on these issues.

Schools Olympics

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ensure that one of the annual Schools Olympics is held in Wales. [61670]

Mr. Caborn: The UK School Games will form an annual part of the preparations leading up to the Olympic Games in 2012, with the first event being staged in September 2006 in Glasgow.

It is our intention that future events are held in each of the home nations and we will announce further plans once they have been finalised.

Tote

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) whether it is her intention to sell the Tote to a horse racing trust or similar horse racing body; [61776]

(2) what steps she is taking to ensure that the horse racing industry will continue to benefit from profits made by the Tote when she sells that organisation; [61777]

(3) what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the sale of the Tote. [61778]

Mr. Caborn: The Government remain committed to selling the Tote to a racing trust. I believe that this is the best way of ensuring that horseracing continues to receive benefit from the Tote.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly discusses a range of issues with colleagues in other departments.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Corruption

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of aid from the UK that has been lost to corruption in each of the last three financial years *(a)* under the overall budget, *(b)* in sub-Saharan Africa and *(c)* in budget support. [57223]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend to the response I gave to the hon. Member for St. Albans (Anne Main) on 16 March 2006, *Official Report,* columns 2425–26W.

DFID reports annually to the Treasury all cases of fraud or theft by staff or contractors. DFID does not otherwise estimate the loss of aid funds to corruption but the Department has recently established a Fraud Response Unit to ensure that all cases of reported fraud and corruption are investigated and appropriate action taken to recover any losses.

DFID requires robust approval, procurement, risk management and reporting arrangements to ensure aid is spent only for the purpose intended, whether funds are managed by DFID or other development partners. We are working with many partner governments to improve their own systems to combat corruption. All aid is subject to independent audit and the National Audit Office has consistently given an unqualified opinion on DFID's accounts.

Diamorphine

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the availability of diamorphine for medicinal purposes in developing countries. [60838]

Mr. Thomas: The International Narcotics Control Board consider that the global supply of medicinal opiates, including diamorphine (heroin) is at levels well in excess of use. There are, however, constraints to demand which are related to countries' own policy restrictions in the use of such drugs. At present diamorphine is subject to tight restrictions on supply and use due to widespread abuse and the capacity to induce dependency. It is not on the WHO Essential Drug list although alternative drugs such as morphine, which are as effective, are included in the list and meet the need for a drug for alleviation of severe pain, particularly in palliative care. This does not preclude counties from procuring and using the drug.

Countries look to the World Health Organization for guidance on the use of such drugs. A number of WHO expert groups will meet in coming months to address issues around improving palliative care, dealing with drug dependency and to revise the essential drug list. The outcome of their deliberations may influence the availability and use of diamorphine for medicinal purposes in developing countries.

DFID normally supports health programmes in developing countries through contributions to the health budget and decisions on which medicines to procure are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

EU Agricultural Policies

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of EU agricultural policies on people in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [62088]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave to the hon. Member for Windsor (Adam Afriyie) on 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 484W.

Lesotho

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development why Lesotho was not included in the final round of countries to be considered for debt cancellation. [60918]

Mr. Thomas: An increased number of countries have become eligible for the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative on the basis of their debt burdens at the end of 2004. They must now begin to make progress through the initiative by the end of 2006 in order to continue to be eligible.

There are two requirements to be eligible for HIPC status:

1. Countries must be eligible to receive assistance only from the most concessional lending arm of the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA). IDA countries are defined as having a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of $965 or less.
2. A country's debt burden must be considered unsustainable in comparison to its revenue and exports.

Lesotho is an IDA only borrower, but does not meet the criteria defining unsustainable debt.

Lesotho could however qualify for the UK's multilateral debt relief initiative (MDRI) providing debt relief to both HIPC and low-income countries (LIC). Under this initiative, the UK pays its share (10 per cent.) of the debt service costs to the World Bank (IDA loans) and African Development Fund debt, of non-HIPC, low-income countries like Lesotho. To qualify for relief under this initiative, countries are required to demonstrate robust public financial management systems to ensure the savings are used for poverty reduction. We are using poverty reduction support credits (PRSC) as a proxy measure of this.

Lesotho is discussing the possibility of a PRSC with the World Bank. DFID is also providing support to Lesotho to improve its financial management systems in order to help it qualify for MDRI.

Lesotho will benefit indirectly from the G8 multilateral debt relief initiative (MDRI). The G8 MDRI will result in HIPCs receiving full debt cancellation of remaining debts to the World Bank (IDA loans), the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Donor support for this will be allocated by these institutions to all poor countries (including non-HIPCs), and therefore Lesotho.

Palestinian Territories

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the role of private sector initiatives as a means of sustaining international aid to the Palestinian territories. [62048]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend to the response I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 881W.

Tsunami

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of aid distribution to those areas affected by the December 2004 tsunami, with particular reference to whether it has been distributed without reference to religious, political or other such considerations. [54918]

Mr. Thomas: We have monitored the distribution of DFID aid to those affected by the December 2004 tsunami. We did learn of some problems in India, where there was some reluctance by the authorities to allow aid to reach certain castes. This was overcome through representations made to the authorities. More recently, however, we have seen the January 2006 report of a five-country study by a group of international charities reporting internal discrimination. Although we manage and monitor DFID humanitarian aid very closely and have found no evidence of discrimination in the distribution of DFID aid in tsunami-affected countries, we take such reporting seriously and are prepared both to discuss this with the international charities and to intervene again, if necessary, with the national authorities.

DFID has provided £1.5 million to the North East Provincial Council Secretariat (NEPC) in partnership with the Governments of Germany and Sri Lanka to improve its capacity to deliver aid and to help ensure that Tamil areas received improved access to development assistance. DFID also channelled £3 million through the United Nations Development Programme for the 'UN Recovery Framework for Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation and Reconstruction' which is helping to ensure that the needs of socially-excluded groups are met during recovery.

A group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), jointly funded by DFID and International NGOs, initiated a Social Equity Audit process in response to claims that some Dalits in India and other groups were being excluded from some post tsunami humanitarian efforts. A group of independent auditors have been trained by experts identified by the International NGOs. The International NGOs will submit their programmes to these auditors to assess how inclusive their post tsunami activities have been in order to improve their programmes and identify ways to make their humanitarian efforts more inclusive in the future. The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund have signed up to the initiative and a Social Equity auditing manual is likely to be produced which DFID will disseminate to NGOs and agencies.

Uganda

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what resources his Department has allocated to assisting the Government of Uganda to carry out a review of its armed forces; and if he will make a statement. [61597]

Hilary Benn: Human security is essential to help reduce poverty. At the same time it is important for governments to strike the right balance between security expenditure and expenditure on areas such as education and health.

DFID has provided approximately £500,000 between December 2001 and December 2005 to help the Ugandan Ministry of Defence carry out Uganda's first strategic Defence Review. The aim of the Defence Review is to make the Uganda People's Defence Force more professional and accountable within the resources available for defence expenditure. In particular, the review has systematically assessed Uganda's security needs and identified the reforms required to address these needs most cost effectively. Its implementation will ensure that Uganda's defence budget is appropriate and affordable in the context of other competing priorities.

Already the review has been the basis for the development of a Defence Corporate Plan that prioritises expenditure and includes indicators which can be used to monitor performance for example in procurement, financial management and management of human resources. The Defence Review and the Corporate Plan provide a basis for more effective dialogue between Government and development partners about Uganda's defence expenditure.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Legal Aid (Support Services)

25. **Ms Abbott:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the Legal Services Commission's decision to end legal aid funding to specialist support services, with particular reference to the recent report of the Constitutional Affairs Committee. [61529]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission published its five-year strategy for the Community Legal Service on 23 March 2006. They will be consulting on proposals on the future of the specialist support initiative in line with that strategy. We will be responding shortly to the Select Committee Report.

House of Lords Reform

26. **Barbara Keeley:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the timetable is for establishing the Joint Committee to consider reform of the House of Lords. [61530]

Bridget Prentice: The Government want to create a reformed upper chamber that is effective, legitimate and more representative without challenging the primacy of the House of Commons. We are committed to establishing a Joint Committee of the two Houses to look at the powers of the House of Lords and I trust we shall be able to proceed with the establishment of the Joint Committee as soon as possible.

Domestic Violence Courts

27. **John Smith:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the introduction of specialist domestic violence courts. [61531]

Ms Harman: By 1 April 2006, the Government's Specialist Domestic Violence Court programme will be supporting 25 specialist domestic violence court systems across England and Wales. These are not just about the courthouse or the practices of the court but are about a multi-agency approach which makes the court system and the CJS part of a community wide response to domestic violence.

Constituency Sizes (Equalisation)

28. **Mr. Stewart Jackson:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on Government policy on the equalisation of the size of constituencies. [61532]

Bridget Prentice: The independent Parliamentary Boundary Commissions review parliamentary boundaries every 8–12 years. Although the electoral quota is important, it is necessary to take other factors into account, such as geographical and community issues. The Parliamentary Boundary Commissions considers all these factors when conducting their review.

New Court House (Colchester)

29. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on progress with the proposed new court house at Colchester. [61534]

Ms Harman: The project for a new court house at Colchester continues. With the advent of Her Majesty's Court Service we have considered all existing projects carefully and Colchester remains a good fit with our objectives for the justice system. We continue to move forward with this scheme.

Carter Review

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs on what evidence the Carter Review's findings that larger firms are more efficient than smaller firms was based. [61314]

Ms Harman: Lord Carter's final report will be published later this spring. The review's research into the efficiency of firms is ongoing and will be published in due course.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the likely effect of Lord Carter's proposals on legal aid on *(a)* black and minority ethnic-owned legal firms and *(b)* ethnic minority communities. [61315]

Ms Harman: Lord Carter's review is independent of Government and is due to be published in late spring 2006. No detailed assessment of the likely effect of Lord Carter's proposals can be provided until then.

The terms of reference for Lord Carter's review require that

> "any plan for procurement reform should encourage a diverse and competitive market of lawyers".

Furthermore, Lord Carter's interim report—in acknowledging that assistance will be needed to ensure that smaller firms are able to adapt to a new procurement regime—states that

> "this [support] will be particularly important in respect of black and minority ethnic firms, to ensure that suppliers continue to reflect the diversity of the communities that they serve."

Citizens Advice Bureau

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what funding has been provided to the Citizens Advice Bureau by *(a)* central and *(b)* local government in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; [59956]

(2) if she will make a statement on the future funding of the Citizens Advice Bureau. [59957]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

Central government does not fund individual Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)—each local CAB is a separate independent charity funded usually by local authorities, charitable trusts or other sources. I do not propose that central government should be directly funding local advice centres on the future. These services are best provided in a way that meets the needs of the local community. Any decision about grant funding for any particular CAB will therefore be for the relevant local authority to make.

Clinical Negligence (Legal Aid)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what sums are due to be reimbursed to the Legal Services Commission in respect of legally-aided clinical negligence litigation in accordance with section 16 of the Legal Aid Act 1988 and sections 10 and 11 of the Access to Justice Act 1999; and if she will make a statement. [61583]

Ms Harman: The information requested is not available.

Consultancy Fees

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which *(a)* companies and *(b)* individuals were in receipt of consultancy fees from her Department in the last financial year. [61007]

Ms Harman: A list of the consultancy companies and individuals that received consultancy fees in 2004–05 is as follows.

Companies used by DCA/court service for provision of consultancy 2004–05

Adult Learning Inspectorate
Alexander Cameron Ltd
Anagram
Analogue
Ask Europe PLC
Assessment and Development Consultancy
BTA Consulting
BTF Associates
Capita Resourcing
Chesterton
CIMTECH
Communication Engagement and Change Ltd
Computer Sciences Corporation
Cornwell Management Consultants
Craigforth
Deloitte MCS Ltd
Dennis Battle Associates
Design Systems Technology Ltd
Digital Public
DTZ Debenhan Tie Leung
Elborough Consulting/TSO Consulting
Enodian Ltd
Ernst and Young LLP
Gartner UK Ltd
GIG Ltd
Haygarth Group
Hedra
Norwood Safety Limited
Hudson Global Resources
Human Assets Ltd
Hurd Rolland
Ilogic Ventures
Insight Consulting Ltd
IPPR Consulting Ltd
Issan Ghazni Partnership
JMH Consultancy
KPMG
Largos Ltd
Lexicon Ltd
Logica CMC UK Ltd
Maitland Consultancy
Mandurai Ltd
Methods Consulting
MORI
Mouchel Consulting Limited
NCC Services Ltd
ORC International
PA
Parity Resources
Penna
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Punter Southall
Rick Evans Ltd
Synopsis Communication Consulting Limited
The Ingram Partnership
Towers Perrin
Tribal MPC
UCL Consultants
Venn Group Ltd
VP Treen and Associates
Watson Associates
Wheelers

Individuals used by DCA/court service for provision of consultancy 2004–05

Rene Caroyal
David Coates
Eleri Evans
John Garnett
Cleo Nicolau
Reshan Sandhu
Professor Susskind
Barry Sutlieff

Homeless People (Legal Services)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to improve access to specialist legal services for homeless people. [61524]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission published its strategy for the Community Legal Service on 23 March, which sets out how the Commission will deliver specialist legal services in the future. It has also increased the number of people receiving specialist legal services this year through the roll out of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme and the increase in the capacity of housing contracts.

Kelly Inquiry

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much Lord Hutton received in payment for conducting the inquiry into the death of Dr. David Kelly. [60923]

Ms Harman: Lord Hutton received his salary as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary until he retired on 11 January 2004, when he received his pension. He did not receive additional payment for the inquiry.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what factors led to the decision to appoint Lord Hutton to head the inquiry into Dr. David Kelly's death; who took that decision; and who was consulted upon it. [60924]

Ms Harman: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Substantive answer from Harriet Harman to Norman Baker:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given in response to PQ 152676 to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1077W.

Legal Aid

Mr. Leech: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was paid in legal aid in the last 12 months for which figures are available in cases requiring family members as defined under section 105 of the Children Act 1989 *(a)* to seek leave in order to apply for a residence order or a special guardianship order and *(b)* who have been caring for a child for at least 12 of the previous 36 months to seek leave in order to apply for a residence order or special guardianship order. [59331]

Ms Harman: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assistance is planned to be given to small firms to help them adapt to legal aid reforms. [61313]

Ms Harman: Lord Carter of Cole's interim report on Criminal Defence Services, published on 9 February, set out a phased transition towards a market-based approach, during which support would be offered to help suppliers either restructure their business or consolidate. This will enable smaller firms to participate in the new procurement regime by increasing their joint capacity, allowing them to benefit from efficiency savings and increase profits. Lord Carter's final report is expected later this spring and it will contain his final recommendations about the nature of support to be provided.

Legal Services Commission

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the minority impact assessment report commissioned by the Legal Services Commission will be published. [61312]

Ms Harman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North-East Hertfordshire (Mr. Heald) on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 75W. The report to which the hon. Member refers has not yet been finalised. The Legal Services Commission intends to publish it in due course.

Residence/Guardianship Orders

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have sought leave to apply for *(a)* a residence order and *(b)* a special guardianship order in the last three months for which figures are available; and how many were family members as defined under section 105 of the Children Act 1989. [59969]

Ms Harman: Statistical information on the number of applications for "leave to apply" for a residence or a special guardianship order is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

2012 Olympics

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support for the London 2012 Olympic bid her Department provided; and what subsequent action her Department has taken to ensure the delivery of the Games. [61482]

Jacqui Smith: Before the Bid, DfES worked with London 2012 to develop Theme 17.3 'Educational programmes: promoting the Olympic Ideal' in the Candidate File (the Bid document), and made the following commitments:

(i) To include a new Olympic dimension in the London Student Pledge;

(ii) To develop an Olympic language mentoring programme in secondary schools;

(iii) To develop a bespoke Olympic strand for the DfES Global Gateway (which supports the development of international school links);

(iv) To launch a 'Young Ambassadors' scheme of enrichment and development activities for young people from deprived areas of the UK to equip participants to serve as volunteers for the Games;

(v) To support the development of the London Olympic Institute by London 2012's successor body, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG);

(vi) To support the development of the 'Olympic Friend-Ship' by LOCOG.

Since the, DfES has worked closely with partners in the Skills Alliance to ensure that the wide range of skills required to deliver a successful Games are available. In particular, the Department has been working with the Learning and Skills Council, the Sector Skills Development Agency and Sector Skills Councils, to ensure that they are working closely with key organisations, such as the London Development Agency, through the new London Employability and Skills Taskforce that has been established to meet skills needs in London and contribute to a longer-term skills legacy.

The Department is also working with the LOCOG to support their work on a strategy for the recruitment, training and accreditation of volunteers for the Games.

The wider programme of work that DfES is currently developing to maximise the benefits of the Games for young people and learners will also help meet LOCOG's aim of delivering a Games that will inspire young people and propagate the Olympic Ideals.

Adult Education

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the Learning and Skills Council's total budget for adult learning was spent on first-step learning in the academic year *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05. [58883]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* I have overall responsibility for the LSC; however, the operations of the LSC are managed and overseen by Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive. The annual grant letter sets the overall LSC budget for the year; and the annual accounts includes a breakdown of adult programme expenditure, including further education, and PCDL (ACL). Allocations below these levels including to first-steps learning and expenditure by academic years, are a matter for the LSC. I therefore have asked Mark Haysom, who has written to my hon. Friend with further information and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

The following table shows the LSC adult programme spend from the LSC for the financial years *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05 taken for the LSC annual accounts.

	Adult programme expenditure (£)
2002–03	2,427,229
2003–04	2,888,486
2004–05	2,998,735

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 23 March 2006:

Adult Learning and First Step Provision

I write with in response to your recent Parliamentary Question, regarding Adult Learning.

First-step learning is designed to introduce, or re-introduce adults back into learning and to provide them with the necessary foundation to progress, where appropriate, to a first full level 2. As such first-step learning may be regarded as all learning activity (including skills for life) at pre-entry and national qualification framework (or equivalent) entry level and level 1.

However, individuals engage in learning at these levels for a variety of reasons, not just for reasons of first-step activity. The following table therefore identifies only the percentage of LSC adult programme spend on learning below level 2 (in the academic years 2003/04 and 2004/05) since the LSC does not collect data on learning intention.

	Percentage of adult programme expenditure (£)
2003/04	40.5
2004/05	40.8

I understand that Liz Davis, Executive Director of the LSC in Cheshire and Warrington, has extended a number of invitations over the past year or so to meet with her. While I understand that you are extremely busy may I strongly recommend that you meet with Liz at your earliest convenience to discuss these issues and some of the specific initiatives that are taking place within your constituency?

I understand from Liz that the LSC and Warrington Borough Council are working together to develop a strategic vision for adult provision across Warrington and to ensure joint planning for the future.

I hope this is helpful.

A-Levels

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of *(a)* A-level candidates and *(b)* all 18-year-olds in England achieved two or more grades A to E at A-level in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; [62060]

(2) what proportion of candidates in England achieved passes at grades A* to C at GCSE in at least five subjects including English and mathematics in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [62061]

Jacqui Smith: The figures requested are shown in the following tables.

	2004–05	*2003–04*
Percentage of 17-year-olds[1,2] achieving two or more GCE/VCE A-level passes	34.3	34.4
Percentage of 16 to 18-year-old[2] candidates[3] achieving two or more GCE/VCE A-level passes	93.2	92.0

[1] Based on estimates provided by the Government Actuary's Department.

[2] Age at start of academic year, i.e. 31 August.

[3] A candidate is a student who has attempted at least one GCE A-level, VCE A-level or VCE Double Award in summer of the academic year.

	2004–05[2]	*2003–04*[2]
Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	636,796	643,560
Percentage achieving 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSE A*-C	44.3	42.6

[1] Age at start of academic year, i.e. 31 August.

[2] Includes attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

Child Maintenance Payments

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department has made an assessment of the feasibility of including child maintenance payments in the household income figure used to calculate eligibility for *(a)* maintenance grant, *(b)* special support grant, *(c)* higher education grant and *(d)* the extra portion of the maintenance loan; and if she will make a statement. [60463]

Bill Rammell: Child maintenance payments were included in the household income for the purposes of the student support income assessment up to and including the 2004/05 academic year. For 2005/06, the treatment of maintenance payments has been aligned with other Government Department income assessments, in particular the income assessment for child tax credit, so that maintenance payments are no longer included. We have not made an assessment of the feasibility of changing back to the earlier system, and have no current plans to do so.

Classroom Behaviour

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assistance her Department is giving to schools in the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood to promote good behaviour in the classroom. [61146]

Jacqui Smith: Our Secondary Strategy gives all secondary schools in Hillingdon access to high-quality behaviour management training materials and support from a DfES-funded behaviour management consultant. Our Primary Strategy is giving all primary schools access to high-quality training and curriculum materials to improve children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. In addition:

our Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme provides Hillingdon with extra funding (just over £1.6 million this year) in order to fund various strands of work, including Learning Mentors and Learning Support Units, in schools in the Hillingdon Excellence Cluster; and

our Behaviour Improvement Programme provides the Hillingdon Excellence Cluster with further additional funding (£728,000 this year) to support selected schools facing the greatest behaviour challenges.

The funding related to both these programmes will continue in 2006–07.

Climate Change

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will introduce the subject of climate change into the National Curriculum. [60992]

Jacqui Smith: Through Geography, pupils aged 11 to 14 are taught about weather, climate and environmental change. The Department has funded the Met Office Education Service to produce a climate change CD-ROM for secondary pupils. In Science, pupils aged 14 to 16 are taught about the use of energy and environmental implications. From this September, the Science curriculum will be strengthened to specifically teach about climate change.

Commercial Marketing (Schools)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what safeguards are in place to ensure children are not exposed to commercial marketing, including brand awareness, through the provision of education materials and facilities where schools are sponsored by private sector organisations. [55242]

Jacqui Smith: This is primarily a matter for head teachers and governing bodies. To assist them, in 2001 the Department published guidance entitled 'Commercial activities in schools: Best Practice Principles'. This was aimed at parents, teachers, school governing bodies, LEAs and businesses. Its principal aim was not only to safeguard children from commercial marketing, but to identify best practice and to ensure that commercial objectives were consistent with genuine educational benefits. We plan to review the guidance, with partner organisations, later this year.

The Specialist Schools Programme requires schools to engage with the private sector and to raise sponsorship; one of the main criteria for eligibility is that sponsorship must be unconditional, i.e. there must be no financial benefit to the sponsor for example in the future purchase of goods, equipment or services.

Contractors

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria she uses to decide whether potential contractors are a bad financial risk. [60582]

Bill Rammell: It is departmental procurement policy to consider the assessment of a potential contractor's financial status at the supplier selection or tender evaluation stage and that the assessment is proportional to the financial risks associated with each individual contract. To avoid additional bidding costs, tenderers are only asked to provide sufficient financial information appropriate to an estimate of the level of risk. For higher risk procurements, information is assessed by qualified or part qualified accountants following supplier financial appraisal guidance issued by OGC or other appropriate guidance.

In terms of general criteria the Department would expect a contractor to be of sufficient size to meet the contract demand and be able to finance any expenditure necessary before invoices are paid by the Department.

Correspondence

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter dated 8 February 2006 from the hon. Member for Tamworth about St. Leonard's primary school. [58080]

Jacqui Smith: I responded to the hon. Member's letter on 28 February.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many publications her Department has sent to teachers in each year since 1997. [59814]

Jacqui Smith: The number of documents sent automatically to all primary and all secondary schools is detailed in the table. Where a document has been sent to all primary and all secondary schools it will appear in the totals for both primary and secondary.

	Primary	*Secondary*
1997–98	86	85
1998–99	96	115
1999–2000	146	164
2000–01	47	48
2001–02	55	54
2002–03	39	43
2003–04	31	38
2004–05	0	0

The Department ceased sending publications automatically to schools in England on a phased basis between April and December 2004. Discussions with Head teachers and detailed research showed that schools wanted to be able to choose the printed publications they needed, when they needed them, and to be able to order multiple copies.

The online ordering system enables schools to choose whether to download electronic copies or order the paper based publications they need at the right time for them and in the multiples they require. This system is linked directly to the fulfilment service and an existing telephone ordering line. A fortnightly email service to schools informs them of new and important publications.

This has resulted in schools being able to order a wider variety of publications from the Department, putting schools in direct control of what they receive, when they receive it.

Disabled Children

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many disabled children, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, her Department expects to have attended children's centres by April 2007; [61680]

(2) when the Government plan to issue guidance to children's centres on their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005; [61681]

(3) how many children's centres have in place an accessibility plan; [61682]

(4) how many disabled children, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, aged under five years attending children's centres *(a)* have a statement of special educational needs and *(b)* are on early action plans; [61683]

(5) how many early years professionals employed in children's centres meet the Special Educational Needs Standard set by the Training and Development Agency. [61684]

Beverley Hughes: Information is not collected centrally on: how many children's centres have in place an accessibility plan; how many children as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, aged under five years attending children's centres have a statement of special educational needs and are on early years action plans; or how many people employed in children's centres meet the Special Educational Needs Standard set by the Training and Development Agency for Schools.

Guidance for early years providers setting out their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is already available and DfES is working with the Council for Disabled Children to produce additional resources for children's centres that will include information about the 2005 duty to promote disability equality. The resources will be available later this year. The DfES Code of Practice on the "Provision of Nursery Education Places for Three- and Four-Year Olds", published in February, drew attention to the Disability Rights Commission's Codes of Practice, one of which gives guidance on the new duty.

Children's centres do not have a duty to have an access plan, but Sure Start has published good practice and training materials on the internet for the early years sector on providing inclusive and accessible services.

We expect children's centres to offer inclusive services for all young children and their families. Disabled children, alongside all other children under 5 will be able to access the range of services provided through their local centre according to their needs. We issued guidance in November 2005 (Sure Start Children's Centres: Practice Guidance) which describes effective ways of working with disabled children and their families and emphasises the importance of outreach services including Portage.

Examinations

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the practice by internet businesses of charging for essays which can be used by the purchaser for assistance in securing an examination qualification; and if she will make a statement. [61773]

Jacqui Smith: Last year, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) undertook a detailed analysis of the issues around coursework, including the use of the internet as a research tool, and reported the findings to the Secretary of State. The QCA have appointed Professor Jean Underwood of Nottingham Trent University to advise on measures which might be taken in schools and colleges and by awarding bodies to reduce the risk of plagiarism from internet sources.

Further Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 16 to 19-year-old students studied *(a)* A-levels and *(b)* vocational courses full-time at each (i) further education college and (ii) sixth form college in Hampshire in each year since 1997. [60889]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on students in Hampshire local authority can be found in the following tables.

Table 1 (i): Number of candidates[1] attempting GCE A-levels in General FE Colleges in Hampshire

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Basingstoke College of Technology	51	49	33	24	[2]—	17	8	3	0
Farnborough College of Technology	119	110	129	105	69	80	67	76	39
Brockenhurst College	498	579	581	544	541	504	557	633	560
Eastleigh College	51	21	17	6	0	0	0	[2]—	0
Fareham College	270	331	301	270	224	192	183	168	106
Cricklade College	241	242	214	214	178	183	126	162	156
Sparsholt College	5	[2]—	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Downs College	298	255	318	299	310	329	351	413	479

Table 1 (ii): Number of candidates[1] attempting GCE A-levels in Sixth Form Colleges in Hampshire

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Alton College	500	594	479	459	502	503	486	504	592
Totton College	195	211	179	174	201	160	195	171	211
Queen Mary's College	621	609	567	520	560	535	591	601	653
Barton Peveril College	783	773	800	716	740	742	694	752	845
Havant College	518	554	513	524	478	480	520	475	628
Sixth Form College Farnborough	640	649	673	665	728	674	783	877	1,012
St.Vincent College	290	287	273	304	329	314	319	309	354
Peter Symonds College	840	839	843	923	945	855	1,082	1,036	1,147

[1] Aged 16 to 18 at the start of the academic year.

[2] Not available due to small numbers.

Table 2 (i): Number of candidates[1] attempting Advanced GNVQs/VCE A-Levels[2] in General FE Colleges in Hampshire

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Basingstoke College of Technology	—	95	103	86	89	104	81	75	17
Farnborough College of Technology	—	120	137	110	97	117	97	49	37
Brockenhurst College	—	133	99	70	142	223	195	186	129
Eastleigh College	—	95	94	95	60	92	60	29	30
Fareham College	—	139	109	130	108	104	103	52	0
Cricklade College	—	34	36	18	27	28	32	32	24
Sparsholt College	—	0	5	5	[3]—	[3]—	12	0	0
South Downs College	—	103	104	101	136	146	116	87	118

Table 2 (ii): Number of candidates[1] attempting Advanced GNVQs/VCE A-Levels[2] in Sixth Form Colleges in Hampshire

	1997[4]	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Alton College	—	81	74	88	95	102	105	102	95
Totton College	—	19	20	3	40	44	52	48	53
Queen Mary's College	—	61	75	64	79	77	102	78	96
Barton Peveril College	—	62	73	51	98	225	175	177	207
Havant College	—	32	37	40	34	76	63	52	55
Sixth Form College Farnborough	—	98	75	86	78	126	144	109	169
St. Vincent College	—	46	58	67	74	122	146	97	90
Peter Symonds College	—	66	59	66	53	59	62	72	90

[1] Aged 16–18 at the start of the academic year.

[2] From 1998 to 2001 includes Advanced GNVQs and from 2001 includes VCE A-Levels and Double Awards.

[3] Not available due to small numbers.

[4] Data on Advanced GNVQ not collected separately.

Table 3 (i) Number of candidates[1] attempting other advanced vocational qualifications in General FE Colleges in Hampshire

	1997[2]	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Basingstoke College of Technology	215	169	150	133	103	135	140	165	267
Farnborough College of Technology	265	47	47	125	116	65	72	113	165
Brockenhurst College	156	32	45	78	64	49	59	90	110
Eastleigh College	149	117	84	73	57	104	104	122	118
Fareham College	101	168	0	85	0	0	0	0	154
Cricklade College	46	31	18	51	33	43	64	67	70
Sparsholt College	45	63	73	86	0	168	189	184	201
South Downs College	217	143	191	184	288	267	279	304	373

Table 3 (ii): Number of candidates[1] attempting other advanced vocational qualifications in Sixth Form Colleges in Hampshire

	1997[2]	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Alton College	108	29	30	28	31	10	0	0	91
Totton College	32	7	0	9	10	26	21	32	36
Queen Mary's College	67	0	0	11	14	37	0	39	106
Barton Peveril College	52	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0
Havant College	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sixth Form College Farnborough	68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Vincent College	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peter Symonds College	76	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] Aged 16 to 18 at the start of the academic year.

[2] 1997 figures include Advanced GNVQs. Data on this qualification was not collected separately prior to 1998.

Table 4 (i): Number of candidates[1] attempting intermediate vocational qualifications in General FE Colleges in Hampshire

	1997[2]	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Basingstoke College of Technology	127	103	113	118	112	107	101	103	114
Farnborough College of Technology	93	104	95	121	131	142	127	130	133
Brockenhurst College	120	129	135	104	107	139	137	117	122
Eastleigh College	144	163	86	51	93	99	87	51	100
Fareham College	103	105	0	143	0	0	0	0	133
Cricklade College	31	40	7	37	45	88	58	61	77
Sparsholt College	199	236	197	168	0	167	122	141	162
South Downs College	167	248	333	376	328	297	313	282	297

Table 4 (ii): Number of candidates[1] attempting intermediate vocational qualifications in Sixth Form Colleges in Hampshire

	1997[2]	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Alton College	82	67	54	64	56	68	41	46	77
Totton College	51	34	53	63	53	96	54	67	70
Queen Mary's College	61	63	67	77	74	94	0	84	104
Barton Peveril College	26	68	0	69	53	72	60	63	67
Havant College	45	28	35	23	0	0	22	0	0
Sixth Form College Farnborough	72	76	55	58	42	60	59	59	50
St. Vincent College	81	79	70	73	103	92	88	85	86
Peter Symonds College	48	41	46	46	43	38	51	34	53

[1] Aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year.

[2] 1997 figures include Advanced GNVQs. Data on this qualification was not collected separately prior to 1998.

Learning and Skills Council

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many meetings of the Learning and Skills Council's management group were attended by representatives of other organisations for the purpose of sharing ideas on learning and skills policy and delivery in the last year for which figures are available; and what the names were of the organisations. [60264]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) management group is part of its internal management structure and responsible for the day-to-day operation of the LSC. The management group consists of the LSC's nine regional directors and four national group directors, and is chaired by the Chief Executive, Mark Haysom.

The LSC National Council is responsible for leading the LSC and setting its overarching strategy for post-16 learning and skills. It consists of a chair and 15 members drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, including employers, local government and community organisations. Representatives from other organisations are also regularly invited to meetings of the National Council, to share their knowledge and expertise on a range of topics. Minutes of Council meetings are published on the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk).

Mark Haysom the LSC's Chief Executive has written to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom:

I am writing further to your Parliamentary Question in which you asked how many meetings of the Learning and Skills Council's management group were attended by representatives of other organisations for the purpose of sharing ideas on learning and skills policy and delivery in the last year.

From January 2005 to the present, 5 management group meetings have had attendance from other organisations. The names of attendees, organisations and dates of the meetings are detailed below:.

Meeting date	*Name*	*Organisation*
20 January 2005	Ruth Spellman	Investors in People
7 April 2005	Sir Andrew Foster	n/a (re: FE Review)
9 June 2005	Sarah Jones	University for Industry
12 July 2005	Sir Andrew Foster	Chair—FE Review
20 January 2006	Caroline Mager/ Andrew Thompson	Quality Improvement Agency

I hope this is of assistance.

Post-16 Education

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many employers in *(a)* the Wakefield District and *(b)* Normanton constituency are providing post-16 education; what the national average is for the number of such employers in a (i) district and (ii) constituency area; and what steps are being taken to encourage more employers to offer such education in each area. [48389]

Phil Hope: To encourage employers to participate in training, we have established an employer-led training infrastructure that puts their needs centre stage. This is reflected in the design and delivery arrangements of, for example, the new national employer training programme Train To Gain. In Further Education we will be looking at the recommendations of the Foster Report on FE Colleges' responsiveness to local and regional employer needs and will be announcing our plans for the next stage of reform in the spring. Responsibility for the planning and funding of post-16 learning outside Higher Education, however, is the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council and Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive has written to my hon. Friend with further detailed information and a copy of his letter has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 8 March 2006:

I am writing in response to your recent Parliamentary Question about employers involved in post 16 education in Wakefield and Normanton.

Before going into detail may I say a word about the LSC's policy in relation to meeting the learning and skills needs of employers, and how we work on this in partnership with others.

At the end of 2005 we published the LSC's Statement of Priorities for 2006/07, a copy of which I enclose. As you will see one of our six priorities is to make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults. This lies at the very heart of your question.

As you will see from pages 12 and 13 of the booklet we have a number of initiatives designed to support employers and learners, and I would like to highlight two in particular.

First, we are building on the success of the Employer Training Pilots (ETP) and from April 2006 we shall roll-out Train to Gain nationally to deliver a range of high quality training for employers with an emphasis on level 2 qualifications and skills for life. A key element of Train to Gain will be a network of skills brokers giving advice to companies on their training needs.

As you will know West Yorkshire is a pilot area for ETP and of the total number of employers engaged in ETP in West Yorkshire, 12.2% (180) are in Wakefield. This is slightly lower than its proportionate share of employers in West Yorkshire, but provides a good platform for a successful launch of Train to Gain. Unfortunately we do not have figures for Normanton.

The second initiative is agenda for change which will radically transform the post 16 learning and skills sector, especially in colleges which are key partners in meeting employer needs. Agenda for change is based on extensive consultation with college principals and involves a genuine partnership between the LSC and the further education sector. Again, full details are given in the booklet.

Turning to the information you have requested, I'm afraid we do not hold it in a way that enables me to answer your question precisely, but I hope the information on the chart I have enclosed is helpful.

Finally, I know that Margaret Coleman, the LSC Regional Director for Yorkshire and the Humber would be very happy to discuss this in more detail, either in your constituency or at the House, for a meeting to be arranged please contact her office directly either via e-mail margaret.coleman@lsc.gov.uk or via telephone 01274 44 4100.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 16 to 19 year olds were unfunded as a consequence of further education colleges exceeding their recruitment targets agreed with the relevant local Learning and Skills Council in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 in (i) each local learning and skills council area and (ii) each college. [55297]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) agrees plans with most further education (FE) colleges which they guarantee to fund. The guarantee that college plans will be fully funded has been widely welcomed by the sector as ensuring stability and providing confidence for colleges to make commitments for the year based on assured levels of funding. The guarantee means that colleges recruiting above agreed plans cannot expect to receive additional funding above the level agreed with the LSC. However, there is an expectation that where colleges have delivered higher volumes in priority areas then this should be reflected in their planning for the following year.

It is only possible to determine the amount of learning delivered above agreed planned levels following detailed analysis of the actual level of delivery in the academic year compared to the agreed planned levels. It is not possible to complete this analysis for 2005/06 until we have full academic year data on delivery, which will not be available until later this year. For 2004/05 the LSC estimate that colleges delivered 9,624 16 to19 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) learner numbers above the planned levels agreed with the LSC. Mark Haysom, the LSC's Chief Executive, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Religious Services

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 428W, on religious services, what discussions have taken place in her Department about whether a daily act of collective worship should continue to be held in accordance with her Department's circular 1/94. [61648]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The current policy regarding collective worship is set out in the Department for Education and Skills circular 1/94. All registered pupils attending a maintained school, primary or secondary, should take part in a daily act of collective worship. This act of collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

School Admissions

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her intention that under the proposed provisions in the Education and Inspections Bill secondary schools will be allowed to have access to pupils' Key Stage 2 results before they are accepted to attend the school; and if she will make a statement. [60991]

Jacqui Smith: We have no intention of introducing any provision allowing access to Key Stage 2 results prior to, or as a condition of, pupils being accepted into secondary schools. We do not support selection and do not wish to see a return to the 11 plus.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her intention that parents be permitted to represent their children in the appeal process regarding moves to secondary schools under the provisions of the Education and Inspection Bill; whether she expects changes to be made to the appeals process by provisions in the Bill; and if she will make a statement. [61122]

Jacqui Smith: Admissions legislation already gives parents the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel, against an admission authority's decision refusing their child admission to a school. The appeal process already allows parents the opportunity to appear in person and make oral representations themselves, or be accompanied, or represented, by a friend. Legal representation will not usually be necessary, but parents are free to have such representation if they wish.

No changes are being made to the appeals process under the provisions of the Education and Inspections Bill.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what investigative powers she proposes to give *(a)* the Schools Adjudicator and *(b)* other bodies to assess the admissions practices of individual schools. [61343]

Jacqui Smith: The Schools Adjudicators already have the power to request the core information they need to consider objections to admission arrangements. In future, we will require admission authorities to provide information needed by the Adjudicators to fulfil their functions.

Admission Forums play a key role in considering admission issues from a local perspective, monitoring how well they are working and advising admission authorities on where they need to be improved. The Bill will strengthen this role by giving Forums the power to object to the Schools Adjudicators about the admission arrangements of any maintained school in their area. It will also give them the power to publish an annual report for the Schools Commissioner about how well admission arrangements are working in their area.

School Inspections (Leicester)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Leicester Ofsted has inspected in the last three years. [59511]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM chief inspector, Maurice Smith, has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Maurice J. Smith, dated 17 March 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

You asked how many schools in Leicestershire have been inspected by Ofsted in the last three years.

During the period January 2003 to December 2005, 35 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, seven special schools and one pupil referral unit were inspected in Leicester. School inspections before September 2005 were carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996, as amended by the Education Act 2002. School inspections since September 2005 are carried out under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

School Performance (Exemptions)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 21 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 217W, on the Education Act 2002, what plans she has to commence the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Education Act 2002 conferring exemptions related to school performance. [61627]

Jacqui Smith: We are keeping the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Education Act 2002, conferring exemptions related to school performance, under review.

School Ratings (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Lancashire local education authority were rated *(a)* grade one, *(b)* grade two, *(c)* grade three and *(d)* grade four when last assessed by the Office of Standards in Education. [59599]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM chief inspector, Maurice Smith, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

School Trusts

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether a fast food company would be permitted to set up a school trust; [35341]

(2) when she will answer question 35341, tabled on 1 December 2005 by the hon. Member for Kingston and Surbiton, on trust schools. [56833]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* It will not be open to any organisation to set up a school trust. It will be for the governing bodies of individual schools to decide whether to form partnerships with trusts, following consultation with parents and other stakeholders. All such trusts will be charities and the consultation will need to set out who the members of the charity will be. In deciding whether to acquire a particular trust, governing bodies will need to take account of the impact of the trust on driving up standards and promoting the well-being of pupils and the wider community. The school would be inspected against the contribution it makes to the five outcomes, including "being healthy". As part of this, inspectors would assess the school's success in promoting healthy eating. Where there are concerns about the nature of a proposed trust, the local authority will be able to refer the case to the schools adjudicator for determination.

Schools (Brighton and Hove)

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many full-time equivalent teachers were working in maintained schools in Brighton and Hove in each year since 1996–97. [58672]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of regular teachers (excluding occasionals) employed in maintained schools by each local authority and Government office region, January 1997 to 2005.

Brighton and Hove local authority was created on 1 April 1997 and therefore figures are not available for January 1997.

Table 15: full-time equivalent regular teachers (excluding occasionals) in service in the maintained sector[1] each year by local authority[2] and Government office region: January 1997 to 2005

England

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Gateshead	1,680	1,630	1,580	1,630	1,670	1,660	1,650	1,620	1,630
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,120	2,130	2,140	2,130	2,180	2,230	2,170	2,160	2,170
North Tyneside	1,650	1,640	1,630	1,600	1,820	1,690	1,650	1,700	1,730
South Tyneside	1,370	1,350	1,380	1,310	1,440	1,460	1,410	1,430	1,410
Sunderland	2,660	2,620	2,650	2,620	2,670	2,670	2,640	2,670	2,690
Hartlepool	840	810	800	820	840	850	840	850	870
Middlesbrough	1,380	1,340	1,270	1,300	1,270	1,310	1,280	1,150	1,160
Redcar and Cleveland	1,300	1,280	1,300	1,300	1,280	1,410	1,370	1,390	1,380
Stockton on Tees	1,650	1,660	1,660	1,720	1,740	1,760	1,760	1,770	1,720
Former Durham	4,910	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Darlington	—	820	820	800	780	840	840	850	860
Durham (post 1 April 1997)	—	4,120	4,190	4,190	4,240	4,270	4,310	4,300	4,300
Northumberland	2,630	2,560	2,600	2,590	2,620	2,760	2,760	2,810	2,790
North East	22,200	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,500	22,900	22,700	22,700	22,700

Table 15: full-time equivalent regular teachers (excluding occasionals) in service in the maintained sector[1] each year by local authority[2] and Government office region: January 1997 to 2005

England

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Cumbria	4,030	4,060	4,130	4.240	4,180	4,380	4,430	4,450	4,560
Former Cheshire	8,190	8,240	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cheshire (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	5,490	5,610	5,600	5,680	5,770	5,710	5,700
Halton	—	—	1,220	1,140	1,140	1,140	1,170	1,140	1,130
Warrington	—	—	1,530	1,650	1,680	1,720	1,730	1,780	1,800
Bolton	2,440	2,430	2,430	2,500	2,500	2,560	2,540	2,540	2,510
Bury	1,460	1,420	1,460	1,470	1,480	1,490	1,500	1,500	1,550
Manchester	3,850	3,730	4,220	3,750	3,790	3,760	3,820	3,830	3,990
Oldham	2,240	2,220	2,230	2,220	2,280	2,270	2,250	2,290	2,380
Rochdale	1,830	1,840	1,830	1,880	1,870	1,900	1,890	1,930	1,920
Salford	1,920	1,900	1,900	1,950	1,920	1,920	1,890	1,930	1,930
Stockport	2,220	2,170	2,210	2,210	2,330	2,350	2,340	2,380	2,280
Tameside	1,830	1,870	1,940	1,960	1,930	2,070	2,030	2,010	1,990
Trafford	1,750	1,860	1,880	1,910	1,900	1,880	2,020	1,970	1,960
Wigan	2,760	2,690	2,690	2,690	2,590	2,800	2,800	2,830	2,890
Former Lancashire	11,870	11,930	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lancashire (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	9,690	9,750	9,710	9,640	9,710	9,920	9,910
Blackburn with Darwen	—	—	1,360	1,390	1,310	1,390	1,400	1,410	1,420
Blackpool	—	—	1,010	1,030	1,100	1,120	1,150	1,160	1,220
Knowsley	1,530	1,530	1,570	1,640	1,530	1,450	1,570	1,510	1,500
Liverpool	4,340	4,280	4,240	4,130	4,320	4,750	4,290	4,410	4,350
St. Helens	1,590	1,570	1,570	1,570	1,570	1,580	1,630	1,550	1,600
Sefton	2,540	2,520	2,510	2,540	2,610	2,620	2,660	2,700	2,520
Wirral	2,930	2,970	2,990	2,970	3,020	3,090	3,080	3,050	3,050
North West	59,300	59,200	60,100	60,200	60,400	61,600	61,700	62,000	62,200
Kingston-Upon-Hull, City of	2,080	2,030	2,060	2,110	2,110	2,150	2,150	2,240	2,260
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,410	2,400	2,410	2,500	2,530	2,560	2,640	2,630	2,690
North East Lincolnshire	1,370	1,300	1,310	1,380	1,360	1,450	1,480	1,450	1,420
North Lincolnshire	1,290	1,240	1,290	1,290	1,340	1,300	1,280	1,340	1,350
North Yorkshire (post 1 April 1996)	4,580	4,560	4,680	4,840	4,940	4,940	5,020	5,080	5,080
York	1,290	1,270	1,290	1,350	1,380	1,390	1,380	1,390	1,390
Barnsley	1,620	1,610	1,610	1,640	1,640	1,650	1,680	1,650	1,720
Doncaster	2,690	2,650	2,630	2,670	2,690	2,790	2,780	2,810	2,820
Rotherham	2,360	2,350	2,360	2,380	2,500	2,520	2,500	2,560	2,610
Sheffield	3,930	3,980	4,050	4,050	4,190	4,110	4,120	4,140	4,150
Bradford	4,660	4,590	4,610	4,610	4,400	4,870	4,640	4,690	4,700
Calderdale	1,770	1,740	1,790	1,800	1,840	1,870	1,900	1,920	1,980
Kirklees	3,260	3,240	3,250	3,300	3,370	3,320	3,350	3,420	3,430
Leeds	5,900	5,860	5,910	6,130	6,040	6,080	5,800	6,130	6,220
Wakefield	2,670	2,620	2,630	2,590	2,700	2,750	2,780	2,790	2,830
Yorkshire and the Humber	41,900	41,400	41,900	42,700	43,000	43,700	43,500	44,200	44,600
Former Derbyshire	7,530	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Derbyshire (post 1 April 1997)[3]	—	5,450	5,590	5,670	5,760	5,870	6,190	5,970	6,160
Derby	—	1,920	1,830	1,890	1,980	2,020	1,970	2,070	2,130
Former Leicestershire	7,690	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Leicestershire (post 1 April 1997)[3]	—	4,800	4,860	4,930	5,020	5,040	5,290	5,220	5,220
Leicester	—	2,570	2,660	2,600	2,760	2,710	2,590	2,730	2,830
Rutland	—	250	260	220	240	250	270	260	260
Lincolnshire	5,130	5,120	5,050	5,090	5,300	5,110	5,240	5,590	5,630
Northamptonshire	5,500	5,290	5,360	5,530	5,330	5,760	5,720	5,760	5,720
Former Nottinghamshire	7,810	7,860	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nottinghamshire (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	5,860	5,950	5,970	6,070	6,180	6,310	6,240
Nottingham	—	—	2,030	2,070	2,110	2,080	2,240	2,300	2,220
East Midlands	33,700	33,300	33,500	34,000	34,500	34,900	35,700	36,200	36,400
Former Hereford and Worcester	5,370	5,420	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Herefordshire	—	—	1,250	1,290	1,300	1,350	1,360	1,380	1,410
Worcestershire	—	—	4,150	4,210	4,270	4,390	4,430	4,490	4,560
Former Shropshire	3,330	3,350	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Shropshire (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	1,940	2,050	2,110	2,140	2,110	2,110	2,080
Telford and Wrekin	—	—	1,360	1,340	1,410	1.420	1,470	1,450	1,420
Former Staffordshire	8,510	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Staffordshire (post 1 April 1997)	—	6,510	6,690	6,740	6,800	6,940	7,160	7,100	7,160
Stoke-on-Trent	—	1,900	1,890	1,900	1,920	1,940	1,980	1,980	1,980
Warwickshire	3,870	3,940	4,000	4,080	4,150	4,200	4,320	4,380	4,420
Birmingham	9,910	9,800	9,760	9,880	10,220	10,440	10,150	10,110	10,540
Coventry	2,800	2,780	2,810	2,800	2,870	2,920	2,910	2,920	2,910
Dudley	2,690	2,690	2,760	2,740	2,780	2,710	2,710	2,740	2,900

Table 15: full-time equivalent regular teachers (excluding occasionals) in service in the maintained sector[1] each year by local authority[2] and Government office region: January 1997 to 2005

England

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Sandwell	2,730	2,710	2,750	2,680	2,620	2,680	2,730	2.760	2,790
Solihull	1,850	1,850	1,920	1,940	2,050	2,000	2,020	1,970	2,000
Walsall	2,590	2,540	2,610	2,360	2,570	2,500	2,530	2,510	2,650
Wolverhampton	2,230	2,220	2,240	2,270	2,290	2,200	2,260	2,310	2,360
West Midlands	45,900	45,700	46,200	46,300	47,400	47,800	48,200	48,200	49,200
Former Cambridgeshire	5,400	5,390	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	3,870	3,940	4,040	4,060	4,210	4,180	4,220
Peterborough	—	—	1,550	1,610	1,510	1,760	1,640	1,590	1,600
Norfolk	5.940	5,940	5,980	5,910	6,050	6,150	6,320	6,230	6,190
Suffolk	5,330	5,380	5,450	5,450	5,490	5,660	5,700	5.900	5,810
Former Bedfordshire	4,990	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bedfordshire (post 1 April 1997)	—	3,360	3,410	3,330	3,250	3,680	3,750	3,720	3,590
Luton	—	1,570	1,560	1,660	1,660	1,730	1,810	1,810	1,870
Former Essex	12,580	12,560	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Essex (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	10,580	10,400	10,520	10,920	10,890	10,980	11,190
Southend-on-Sea	—	—	1,270	1,380	1,410	1,520	1.560	1,610	1,640
Thurrock	—	—	1,060	1,110	1,180	1,210	1,230	1,250	1,250
Hertfordshire	9,040	8,970	9,070	9,030	9,170	9,550	9,610	9,820	9,810
East of England	43,300	43,200	43,800	43,800	44,300	46,200	46,700	47,100	47,200
City of London	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Camden	1,500	1,480	1,440	1,340	1,430	1,570	1,450	1,420	1,480
Greenwich	2,070	2,010	2,030	2,040	2,030	2,080	2,140	2,190	2,260
Hackney	1,450	1,490	1,520	1,510	1.480	1,470	1,600	1,550	1,630
Hammersmith and Fulham	930	920	930	1,000	1,000	1,010	1,060	1,120	1,140
Islington	1,420	1,410	1,330	1,350	1,300	1,460	1,380	1,440	1,440
Kensington and Chelsea	680	670	680	650	660	670	720	690	690
Lambeth	1,710	1,700	1,660	1,620	1,580	1,670	1.620	1,670	1,770
Lewisham	1,870	1,870	1,810	1,890	1,980	2,070	2,040	2,010	1,990
Southwark	1,750	1,800	1,850	1,840	1,960	2,060	2,090	2,030	2,030
Tower Hamlets	2,270	2,170	2,310	2,250	2,180	2,220	2,310	2,280	2,310
Wandsworth	1,690	1,680	1,700	1,680	1,730	1,770	1,750	1,780	1,840
Westminster	1,140	1,160	1,160	1,190	1,250	1,300	1,320	1,290	1,340
Barking and Dagenham	1,450	1,420	1,450	1,470	1,480	1.510	1,570	1,680	1,650
Barnet	2,770	2,730	2,720	2,710	2,740	2,820	2,850	2,800	2,790
Bexley	1,860	1,870	1,940	1,920	2,030	2,160	2,090	2,110	2,050
Brent	2,160	2,190	2,160	2,100	2,110	2,160	2,380	2,350	2,490
Bromley	2,270	2,330	2,340	2,340	2,540	2,640	2,590	2,620	2,690
Croydon	2,620	2,640	2,590	2,880	2,820	2,860	2,880	2,890	3,000
Ealing	2,230	2,220	2,250	2,240	2,220	2,320	2,310	2,300	2,330
Enfield	2,550	2,610	2,650	2,740	2,670	2,670	2,820	2,880	2,950
Haringey	1,870	1,830	1,860	1,850	1,850	1,890	1,910	1,910	1,970
Harrow	1,580	1,500	1,490	1,380	1,490	1,500	1,550	1,560	1,590
Havering	1,870	1,870	1,900	1,890	1,950	2,040	2,060	2,090	2,050
Hillingdon	2,000	2,030	2,030	2,130	2,180	2,230	2,230	2,350	2,400
Hounslow	2,000	1,940	1,980	1,950	2,020	2,010	2,010	2,120	2,160
Kingston upon Thames	1,060	1,050	1,040	1,060	1,070	1,070	1,170	1,150	1,190
Merton	1,210	1,170	1,190	1,150	1,210	1,210	1,240	1,180	1,260
Newham	2,190	2,200	2,290	2,350	2,420	2,520	2,570	2,790	2,820
Redbridge	2,100	2,130	2,180	2,200	2,370	2,380	2,470	2,510	2,470
Richmond upon Thames	1,070	1,070	1,060	1,030	1,040	1,090	1,100	1,050	1,060
Sutton	1,390	1,420	1,450	1,480	1,530	1,590	1,710	1,700	1,750
Waltham Forest	2,010	2,080	2,090	2,060	1,940	2,020	1,940	2,080	2,120
London	56,800	56,700	57,100	57,300	58,300	60,100	60,900	61,600	62,700
Former Berkshire	6,280	6,290	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bracknell Forest	—	—	730	760	760	760	810	790	780
Windsor and Maidenhead	—	—	1,000	1,000	990	1,060	1,050	1,130	1,120
West Berkshire	—	—	1,310	1,440	1,330	1,400	1,440	1,500	1,520
Reading	—	—	930	970	990	1,030	1,010	1,010	1,030
Slough	—	—	1,060	1,040	1,090	1,320	1,180	1,150	1,230
Wokingham	—	—	1,220	1,250	1,280	1,350	1,310	1,320	1,390
Former Buckinghamshire	5.370	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Buckinghamshire (post 1 April 1997)	—	3,790	3,740	3.930	3,900	4,030	4,240	4,210	4,270
Milton Keynes	—	1,730	1,790	1,750	1,760	1,810	1,900	2,040	2,070
Former East Sussex	5,110	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
East Sussex (post 1 April 1997)	—	3,430	3,410	3,560	3,610	3,620	3,740	3,730	3,690
Brighton and Hove	—	1,600	1,650	1,660	1,730	1,800	1,770	1,770	1,750
Former Hampshire	11,990	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 15: full-time equivalent regular teachers (excluding occasionals) in service in the maintained sector[1] each year by local authority[2] and Government office region: January 1997 to 2005

England

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Hampshire (post 1 April 1997)	—	8,960	8,980	8,980	8,970	9,310	9,370	9,380	9,680
Portsmouth	—	1,320	1,540	1,430	1,480	1,430	1,420	1,410	1,390
Southampton	—	1,670	1,670	1,640	1,640	1,710	1,700	1,740	1,730
Isle of Wight	1,020	1,030	1,060	1,070	1,100	1,150	1,170	1,140	1,180
Former Kent	13,180	13,080	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kent (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	10,860	11,300	11,320	11,310	11,460	12,200	12,510
Medway	—	—	2,280	2,180	2,180	2,200	2,520	2,560	2,500
Oxfordshire	4,270	4,260	4,290	4,680	4,790	4,900	4,900	4,900	4,900
Surrey	7,220	7,160	7,140	7,290	7,310	7,560	7,660	7,690	7,650
West Sussex	5,400	5,490	5,590	5,560	5,610	5,770	5,920	5,810	5,890
South East	59,800	59,800	60,300	61,500	61,800	63,500	64,600	65,500	66,300
Isles of Scilly	20	20	20	20	20	20	30	30	20
Bath and North East Somerset	1,370	1,350	1,350	1,360	1,390	1,410	1,440	1,390	1,410
City of Bristol	2,900	2,810	2,710	2,700	2,790	2,700	2,800	2,730	2,810
North Somerset	1,450	1,380	1,360	1,360	1,420	1,480	1,490	1,500	1,540
South Gloucestershire	1,970	1,980	2,050	2,090	2,120	2,160	2,180	2,180	2,180
Cornwall	3,610	3,590	3,570	3,730	3,800	3,880	4,020	4,010	4.100
Former Devon	7,700	7,800	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Devon (post 1 April 1998)	—	—	4,780	4,970	5,030	5,120	5,160	5,420	5,450
Plymouth	—	—	2,150	2,180	2,210	2,250	2,250	2,200	2,210
Torbay	—	—	960	910	970	1,060	1,040	1,080	1,140
Former Dorset	4,730	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dorset (post 1 April 1997)	—	2,790	2.770	2,790	2,880	2,940	3,050	3,120	3,100
Poole	—	1,060	1,010	1,010	1,030	1,050	1,090	1,070	1,060
Bournemouth	—	1,040	1,070	1,090	1,110	1,140	1,130	1,130	1,130
Gloucestershire	4,410	4,460	4,480	4,620	4,680	4,910	5,080	5,170	5,100
Somerset	3,480	3,480	3,380	3,530	3,770	3,770	3,890	3,980	4,090
Former Wiltshire	4,690	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wiltshire (post 1 April 1997)	—	3,180	3,170	3,100	3,340	3,390	3,520	3,560	3,680
Swindon	—	1,440	1,480	1,490	1,440	1,600	1,570	1,600	1,590
South West	36,300	36,400	36,300	37,000	38,000	38,900	39,700	40,200	40,600
England	399,200	397,700	401,200	404,600	410,200	419,600	423,600	427,700	431,900

[1] Figures are for the maintained sector. Teachers in academies (including those that were previously maintained schools) are not included. See note to editors 1 in SFR 41/2005 for further details.

[2] The first, second and third phases of local government reorganisation came into effect on 1 April 1996, 1 April 1997 and 1 April 1998 respectively. The new authorities are shown directly below their former parent local authorities.

[3] Figures for Derbyshire and Leicestershire for 2003 may be overstated.

Notes:

1. See note to editors 2 in SFR 41/2005 for falling pupil numbers.
2. Totals may not appear equal to the sum of the component parts because of rounding.

Source:

61 8g survey

Schools (Lewes)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in Lewes constituency left school with fewer than five GCSEs at A*-C grade in each year since 1997. [60895]

Jacqui Smith: The figures requested are shown in the table.

Proportion of 15 year olds[1] not achieving 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] maintained schools only*

	Number of 15 year old pupils in Lewes constituency[3]	*Percentage not achieving 5+ A*-C*
1997	943	54.5
1998	968	52.5
1999	972	50.2
2000	929	45.5
2001	1,008	44.9
2002	973	46.5
2003	999	44.1
2004	1,066	42.9
2005	1,079	48.8

[1] Age at the start of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).

[2] From 1997 includes GNVQ equivalences and from 2004 other equivalences approved for use pre 16.

[3] Pupils attending schools located in Lewes constituency.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent as a proportion of the total budget of the Lancashire local education authority on special needs education in each year since 1997. [61324]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is only available from 2000–01 onwards and is contained within the following table.

Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1,2] by Lancashire local authority since 2000–01

	Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1,2] (£)	*Total education revenue expenditure[3] (£)*	*Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with SEN as a percentage of total education revenue expenditure*
2000–01	79,766,000	511,182,000	15.6
2001–02	82,826,000	543,019,000	15.3
2002–03	86,666,000	569,835,000	15.2
2003–04	99,347,000	608,216,000	16.3
2004–05	106,320,000	641,611,000	16.6
2005–06[4]	109,113,000	702,069,000	15.5 (16.1)

[1] Includes planned expenditure on the provision for pupils with statements and the provision for non-statemented pupils with SEN, support for inclusion, inter authority recoupment, fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad, educational psychology service, local authority functions in relation to child protection, therapies and other health related services, parent partnership, guidance and information, the monitoring of SEN provision and inclusion administration, assessment and co-ordination. Also included is the funding delegated to nursery, primary and secondary schools identified as "notional SEN" and the individual schools budget (ISB) for special schools.

[2] The ISB for special schools will include some general education costs for pupils with SEN in addition to those costs specifically for SEN while the figures recorded against "notional SEN" are only indicative of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN. In 2005–06, Lancashire also budgeted £13.2 million for SEN transport expenditure but this is not included in the budgeted net expenditure on SEN as figures are not available prior to 2005–06.

[3] Total Education Revenue Expenditure is the combination of the total schools budget and the total local authority budget. For the first time in 2005–06 Threshold and Performance Pay costs were recorded gross in the Section 52 Budget Statement which has had the effect of increasing Lancashire's 2005–06 total education revenue expenditure by over £24 million. Consequently, for comparison with earlier years, the adjusted budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with SEN as a percentage of total education revenue expenditure in 2005–06 is 16.1 per cent. and this figure is included in brackets.

[4] The data are drawn from Lancashire local authority's Section 52 Budget Statements (Tables 1 and 2) submitted to the DfES.

Note:

Figures are as reported by the LEA in cash terms and rounded to the nearest thousand pounds and may not sum due to rounding.

State Education Institutions (Private Donations)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much private money was donated to state education institutions in the last year for which figures are available; and how much revenue was generated by managed bequest reserves in that year. [59830]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold details centrally of how much private money was donated to education institutions nor does it hold information on revenue generated by managed bequests. To collect this information would incur disproportionate cost. However, we do know that, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency income to English Higher Education Institutions from endowment and investment funds was £197 million in 2003–04.

Student Loans

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people failed to make repayments to their student loan accounts in each of the last five years; and how many of them the Student Loans Company failed to trace. [53343]

Bill Rammell: There are two student loans schemes. Mortgage-style loans were introduced in 1990. Income-contingent loans were introduced for new students from 1998, while continuing students remained eligible for mortgage-style loans.

The first cohort of students on three year courses with income-contingent loans entered repayment status in April 2002. However, borrowers only make repayments when they are earning over £15,000 and those earning less are not required to make any repayments. Most income-contingent loan repayments are collected by employers through the tax system and current policy ensures that deductions keep pace with earnings so borrowers do not become overdue on their accounts.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) automatically traces most income contingent loan borrowers through the tax system and the Student Loans Company ensures that HMRC has the information needed to match borrower accounts to tax records, actively chasing borrowers as necessary for information.

The position on overdue mortgage style loans is as follows:

UK borrowers with student loans in arrears at the end of each financial year (public debt only)

	Less than two months in arrears	*Two plus months in arrears*	*All arrears[1]*
2000–01	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	101,300
2001–02	28,700	80,400	109,100
2002–03	39,300	71,700	111,000
2003–04	51,100	62,100	113,300
2004–05 (provisional)	58,100	59,100	117,200

[1] May double count borrowers with loans in both categories

[2] Consistent figures are not available for 2000–01.

Source:

Student Loans Company

UK borrowers with overdue mortgage-style loans that SLC were attempting to trace, at the end of each financial year (public debt only)

	Number
2000–01	18,600
2001–02	14,400
2002–03	21,700
2003–04	18,400
2004–05	19,800

Source:

Student Loans Company

CABINET OFFICE

Capita Group

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* Ministers in his Department have held with directors and senior executives of (i) Capita Group plc and (ii) its subsidiaries since 1 January 2004; and whether (A) Capita Group plc and (B) its subsidiaries have provided input (1) in writing and (2) in person to policy discussions in his Department since 1st January 2004. [61092]

Mr. Jim Murphy: This information is not held centrally. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what additional costs were incurred in each month from September 2004 until the 2005 General Election in respect of extra *(a)* ministerial salaries and costs, *(b)* staff salaries and costs and *(c)* other associated costs as a result of the appointment of a separate Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and whether and on what date this information has previously been disclosed. [60893]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave the hon. Member for North-East Hertfordshire (Mr. Heald) on 23 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 479W.

Civil Contingency College

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last visited the Civil Contingency College at Hawkhills near Easingwold, Vale of York to discuss civil contingency planning. [60841]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have not visited the Emergency Planning College.

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has been accounted for by his Office in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61365]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The amount of employers' accruing superannuation liability charges in respect of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in the last five years is shown in the table.

	£000
2004–05[1]	10,265
2003–04[1]	10,298
2002–03[1]	10,215
2001–02	16,961
2000–01	14,533

[1] From 1 October 2002 new entrants have been able to opt for a partnership pension partnership account, a stakeholder arrangement with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions to partnership pension accounts are not included in the figures.

DEFENCE

Advertising Campaigns

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* national and *(b)* regional advertising campaigns his Department has carried out in each of the last three years; and what the cost was of (i) the creative work and (ii) the purchase of airtime and media space for each campaign. [60950]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* The cost of the Services' recruit advertising campaigns for the years in question are as follows.

£ million

	Media costs	*Creative costs*
Naval Service		
National		
FY2003/04	3.413	1.084
RM specific[1]	0.956	0
FY2004/05	3.153	1.429
RM specific[1]	2.260	0
FY2005/06	2.386	0.672
RM specific[1]	2.352	0
Regional		
FY2003–04	0.300	[2]—
FY2004–05	0.400	[2]—
FY2005–06	0.493	[2]—
Army		
National		
FY2003–04	4.500	0.900
FY2004–05	11.100	1.900
FY2005–06	16.000	2.500
Regional		
FY2003–04	1.500	0.850
FY2004–05	2.100	0.850
FY2005–06	2.000	0.850
RAF3		
National		
FY2003–04	2.649	0.481
FY2004–05	2.039	0.929
FY2005–06	1.881	0.075
Regional 3		

[1] The RM specific campaign costs are in addition to the Naval Service's main costs.

[2] Naval Service regional advertising does not attract any creative costs. All creative work for adverts is carried out centrally to ensure continuity.

[3] RAF recruit advertising is carried out centrally rather than on a regional basis.

Naval Service recruit advertising includes specific campaigns aimed at attracting Royal Marine recruits and additional personnel from our ethnic minority communities and, in FY2005–06, a campaign to attract Engineers. National and regional advertising campaigns for the Regular Army, and national campaigns for the Territorial Army, are run every year: individual campaigns to address particular Army recruiting shortages are run periodically and are multi-media combining national with regional advertising. The RAF's annual national recruit advertising campaign costs includes an element for online costs.

Departmental Employees

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what compensation he has made available to those of his Department's employees who are based in Shropshire who do not wish to move to work in Bristol. [61006]

Mr. Ingram: A business case is being developed within the Ministry of Defence that explores potential options for the collocation of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) with the Defence Procurement

Agency in the Bristol/Bath area. This involves the possible withdrawal of the DLO from a number of locations, namely: Andover, the Foxhill site in Bath, RAF Brampton/Wyton, Castle Court in Sherborne, Caversfield near Bicester, Sapphire House in Telford, and Yeovilton.

It would be wrong at this stage to speculate on the potential impact of eventual decisions on employees. I expect the business case to be presented for consideration in the Spring of this year, following which there will be a period of consultation with the Trades Unions.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60326]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has published a Sustainable Development Delivery Strategy for Non Operational Energy which can be found on the MOD website (www.mod.uk). This sets out MODs approach to delivering energy targets in the 'Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate'. A range of appraisal tools and evaluation methodologies are mandated for use across the MOD in our future planning, design and procurement arrangements to ensure that the potential to improve energy efficiency is realised. In addition, the MOD has a partnership agreement with the Carbon Trust, to help it explore alternative sources of fuel and technology.

European Defence Agency

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the work programme of the European Defence Agency is; what the cost has been since it was established; what the UK's contribution has been; and if he will make a statement. [61586]

John Reid: I will place a copy of the European Defence Agency's (EDA's) 2006 work programme in the Library of the House. Participating member states will contribute €21.5 million towards the EDA's budget in 2006. The United Kingdom contribution in 2006 will be 17.572 per cent., i.e. €3,778,052.

The EDA was established in July 2004. Member states contributed €1,786,483 in 2004 of which the UK's share was 17.28 per cent., i.e. €308,776. The actual audited costs incurred by the Agency in 2004 were 364,069. The underspend was returned to participating member states through an equivalent reduction to their contributions to the following year's budget.

Participating member states were budgeted to contribute €19.9 million in 2005 of which the UK contribution was budgeted to be 18.07 per cent. i.e. €3,596,803. However, taking account of the underspend from the previous year the UK contribution was €3,350,954. The annual audit of the EDA's 2005 accounts is currently taking place and so I am not at this moment able to give you a figure for the actual costs incurred by the EDA in 2005.

Iraq

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British soldiers are awaiting their Iraq campaign medals following active service tours of that country in 2004. [60764]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* It is not possible to answer the question in the format required.

As at 24 February 2006, 103,826 applications for the Iraq medal had been received from armed forces personnel. Of the 101,054 applications assessed as eligible, 93,943 medals had been despatched and a further 7,111 are going through the despatch process.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United Kingdom used Norwegian Government radar equipment as part of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. [61151]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Yes, we made use of Norwegian radar equipment. The United Kingdom and Norway enjoy close defence relations, and the UK remains grateful for the protection these assets offered our Forces.

MAN ERF

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has secured a requirement that vehicles made under the recent series of his Department's contracts with MAN of Germany will be received into the UK, checked and despatched for operational use by the customers at MAN ERF UK's Northern regional office and facility at Middlewich in Cheshire. [61588]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* No. In line with normal Ministry of Defence practice, the vehicles will be checked and despatched to units via the Defence Storage and Distribution Centre at Ashchurch, Gloucestershire.

Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the award of the contract to refit the nuclear submarine HMS Torbay to Babcock Naval Services in Scotland represents a change in policy in relation to the refit of nuclear submarines; and if he will make a statement. [61607]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* HMS Torbay is due to commence a routine pre-planned Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period (RAMP) in early 2007. Although such work is normally undertaken at a submarine's home port, which in Torbay's case is Devonport, the decision to move her RAMP to Faslane was made because of the heavy programme of work at Devonport and a relatively light loading at Faslane during the same time period. This is consistent with the Department's drive to improve submarine availability, reduce costs and improve co-operation between key suppliers.

Nuclear submarine refit and refuelling work will continue to be carried out at Devonport Dockyard, which has the only facilities in the UK capable of undertaking such work.

Royal Medical Corps

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average time gap has been between operational deployments in each of the last three years for those in the *(a)* Regular and *(b)* Territorial Royal Medical Corps. [61032]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Seaford Drill Hall

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make progress in identifying a future use for the drill hall in Seaford. [61241]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Defence Estates, an agency within the Ministry of Defence, is working closely with the South Eastern Reserve Forces and Cadets Association in identifying a future use for the Drill Hall at Seaford.

Although some progress has been made, no decisions have yet been made.

Special Investigations Branch

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the staffing levels of the special investigations branch of the Royal Military Police. [61013]

Mr. Touhig: The three services all have a special investigation branch capability.

In the Army, the Royal Military Police have 235 investigators in the special investigation branch, while the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy have 35 and ten investigators respectively employed on special investigation branch duties.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the position of Project One Army Recruiting for the Territorial Army. [61034]

Mr. Touhig: Project One Army Recruiting is a major change programme to improve recruiting into the Regular and Territorial Army (TA), by integrating the recruiting operations of the two organisations. Implementation will begin on 1 April 2006 when Regional Brigade Commanders, who already have responsibility for the TA in their area, will become responsible for the combined recruiting operation. Full implementation is planned for 2011.

Unidentified Flying Objects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department's unidentified flying objects project is extant; and if he will make a statement. [60875]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has never operated an UFO Project. UFO sightings reported to the MOD are examined solely within the context of controlling the integrity of the UK's airspace. The MOD does not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting, unless there is evidence of a risk to this integrity. Examination of UFO sighting reports is a task performed by desk officers within the directorate of air staff.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many incidents of antisocial behaviour have been reported to South Wales Police H Division since January; and if he will make a statement; [60807]

(2) what progress is being made in reducing incidents of antisocial behaviour in England and Wales. [60808]

Hazel Blears: The data is not available in the form requested. Antisocial behaviour is not measured by incidents but through a measure of perceptions using the British Crime Survey (BCS). The latest figures available at police force area level are for 2004–05. The design of the BCS means that data for individual months is not available. The measure of antisocial behaviour used is based on a scale constructed from seven questions on problems due to noisy neighbours or loud parties, teenagers and young people hanging around, rubbish and litter, vandalism, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy and abandoned cars. In the 2004–05 BCS 14 per cent. of people in South Wales perceived there to be high levels of antisocial behaviour in their local area, compared with 17 per cent. of people nationally. Between 2003–04 and 2004–05 there was no change in the proportion of people perceiving high levels of antisocial behaviour in South Wales.

Community Support Officers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers have been introduced in Lancashire since the scheme began. [60795]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 22 March 2006]:* As at 31 March 2003, Lancashire had 77 PCSOs. 110 PCSOs were introduced by 31 March 2004, this increased by 51 giving a total of 161 PCSOs as at 31 March 2005. This figure decreased by two, to 159 as at 30 September 2005.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers have been introduced in the county of Durham since the scheme commenced. [61136]

Hazel Blears: As at 31 March 2003, Durham had 10 PCSOs. 28 PCSOs were introduced by 31 March 2004, this increased by 41 giving a total of 69 PCSOs as at 31 March 2005. This figure increased by three, to 72 as at 30 September 2005.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 16 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Ms Shantall Richardson. [59970]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton on 22 March 2006.

Criminal Records Checks

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken by each police force was to respond to inquiries from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) as part of routine CRB checks in the last year for which figures are available. [60778]

Andy Burnham: The following table illustrates the average time taken by each of the police forces in England and Wales to conduct checks against their local intelligence systems between 1 March 2005 and 28 February 2006. The existing SLA target is 90 per cent. within 14 days.

Force	*Average*
Metropolitan	40.92
West Midlands	31.75
Hampshire	27.34
Merseyside	22.03
Gwent	21.03
Greater Manchester	8.71
South Wales	15.93
Staffordshire	15.61
Cambridgeshire	15.30
Derbyshire	14.96
Norfolk	14.71
Humberside	14.50
Wiltshire	12.79
Cumbria	11.91
Leicestershire	11.79
Kent	11.30
Cleveland	11.06
Hertfordshire	10.97
Suffolk	10.59
South Yorkshire	10.50
Surrey	10.08
Nottinghamshire	9.77
North Wales	8.95
Avon and Somerset	8.89
Cheshire	8.84
Devon and Cornwall	8.13
Thames Valley	7.78
West Yorkshire	7.32
Northumbria	7.06
Essex	5.89
Durham	5.68
Lancashire	5.57
Gloucestershire	4.70
Northamptonshire	3.83
Sussex	3.62
West Mercia	3.61
Warwickshire	2.78
Dyfed Powys	2.45
City of London	2.44
North Yorkshire	1.97
Lincolnshire	1.73
Dorset	1.34
Bedfordshire	1.17

The performance of the Metropolitan Police Service (MRS), West Midlands, Hampshire, Merseyside and Gwent has impacted on the CRB's overall service standard for Enhanced Disclosures. Although the performance of Greater Manchester Police (GMP), South Wales, Staffordshire and Cambridgeshire has been below the SLA target the impact of their failure has been lessened by faster handover of cases to forces by the CRB during this period.

From April 2006 a revised service level agreement (SLA) will come into effect between the CRB and the 43 police forces of England and Wales. This new agreement, which has been agreed by the association of Chief of Police Officers (ACPO) will place additional focus on delivery and the responsibility of Chief Officers and ACPO to ensure that the obligations within the SLA are met.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by how much the cost of a Criminal Records Bureau check is expected to change over the next five years. [60817]

Andy Burnham: CRB sought a £2 increase in Disclosure fees in 2006 to fund various initiatives while achieving self funding status. While the range of external dependencies associated with the initiatives makes it difficult to predict the scale and timing of their impact on fees over the next five years, the CRB expects any increases to be at or below inflation with, potentially, fee reductions in the later years.

Data-mining

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 114W, on data-mining, what checks and balances have been introduced since the practice of data-mining began. [61257]

Andy Burnham: As part of their role in protecting the confidentiality of statistical data within their care the Office for National Statistics has issued guidelines on the access of statistical data. Where statistical data includes data specifically collected through censuses and surveys for statistical purposes, as well as data derived from administrative systems. Details of the latest version of these guidelines can be found in the National Statistics code of practice: Protocol on Data Access and Confidentiality which can be accessed at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about_ns/cop/default.asp A statement that sets out how my Department fits into the code of practice can be found on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/statsprog1.html In addition, in November 2005 the Council for Science and Technology published their report—'Better use of personal information—opportunities and risks of wider data sharing.'

This report looks at practical ways we can better share personal data and the sorts of constraints and controls that need to be in place to retain a proper balance between achieving the benefits of promoting greater access and protecting the individual citizen. Paul Wiles, the Home Office chief scientific advisor, is working closely with colleagues across Government to develop a detailed action plan in response to this report on how the reports recommendations can be appropriately reflected in any future work done in this area.

Driving Offences

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to increase the penalty for driving whilst disqualified. [60850]

Paul Goggins: The Government have no plans to increase the penalty for driving while disqualified. However, we propose to increase penalties for illegal drivers (including disqualified drivers) who cause fatal accidents and we have included a new offence of causing death while driving disqualified, unlicensed or uninsured in the Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament.

Drug Treatment Programmes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned on the levels of participation in the Government drug treatment programmes in the 10 most deprived constituencies in England and Wales. [47692]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has commissioned no studies on the levels of participation in drug treatment programmes in the 10 most deprived constituencies in England and Wales.

For the latest numbers in treatment in the most deprived local authorities, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1664–65W.

Khalid Rashid

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any employee of the Government was *(a)* involved in and *(b)* present at the rendition of Khalid Rashid following his arrest on 31 October 2005 in Estcourt, Kwazulu Natal, South Africa; and if he will make a statement. [57427]

Hazel Blears: It is the United Kingdom Government's understanding that Khalid Rashid was removed from South Africa on immigration grounds. This is a matter for the South African authorities.

Operation Trident

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 957W, on Operation Trident, what the figures were for each London borough not referred to in the answer. [61609]

Hazel Blears: The requested data are not collected centrally. Crime statistics for each London borough, including figures for gun-enabled crime, are published by the metropolitan police service and are available on their website at http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/.

Police

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 has been used in each police force area since its introduction. [61292]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of members of the police officers' pension scheme joined the scheme *(a)* before the age of (i) 20, (ii) 25, (iii) 30, (iv) 35, (v) 40 and (vi) 45 and *(b)* when they were over 45 years. [61392]

Hazel Blears: The most recent figures relate to the membership of the police pension scheme as at 31 March 2003. The data collected included the pensionable service and date of birth of each member. From these data we can deduce age on entry into the scheme. However, this will not give the correct joining age in all cases—for instance where members have part-time service, career breaks, or have transferred in pensionable service from elsewhere.

Age at joining	*Percentage*
Under 20	24
20–24	46
25–29	21
30–34	6
35–39	2
40–44	1
Over 44	0

Pornography

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the merits of commissioning research into the potential effects of hardcore pornography. [60815]

Paul Goggins: There has been no recent research commissioned specifically into the potential harm and influence of "hardcore pornography". The last HO commissioned review of research in this area—Pornography: Impacts and Influences—reported in 1990 and concluded that evidence of the adverse effects of pornography (in its broadest sense) was not clear cut.

As part of the joint work which the Department of Health (DH) and the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) are doing on the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (WAPP), a Rapid Evidence Assessment has been jointly commissioned by the DH and the Home Office to assess the evidence of harm relating to exposure specifically to violent and extreme pornographic material.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken *(a)* to restrict the availability and *(b)* to prevent the importation of violent pornography. [60819]

Paul Goggins: All published material, including violent pornography, is subject to the Obscene Publications Act 1959, which makes illegal the publication of an article whose effect, taken as a whole, is to tend to deprave and corrupt those likely to read, see or hear it. The responsibility for the prevention of the physical importation of obscene material lies with HM Revenue and Customs under section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876 and section 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

The Obscene Publications Act applies equally to material published over the internet, though the overwhelming majority of potentially obscene material published on the internet originates abroad and beyond our jurisdiction. This raises a challenge to our controls on obscene material. The Government therefore recently undertook a consultation on proposals to make illegal the possession of a limited category of extreme pornographic material. The responses to this consultation are currently being considered.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on the provision of food *(a)* in total and *(b)* per prisoner per day at each prison in each of the last 10 years. [60717]

Fiona Mactaggart: Additional data before 2001 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Information about the cost of food at prisons operated by the contracted sector is not routinely collected and could also be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The table shows the cost of food for prisoners whose meals are directly provided by the public Prison Service in total and by prison. A copy of the table will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve the quality of catering in prisons. [60720]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Audit Office report 'Serving Time: Prisoner Diet and Exercise' published on 9 March 2006 reported that the Prison Service has, in the past few years, improved the quality and range of meals as well as providing a well managed and professional catering service. I expect the Prison Service to continue improving the quality of catering by building on the progress already made.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average period of time per week available for physical exercise for inmates was at each prison in each of the last five years; what action he is taking to increase the *(a)* availability and *(b)* take-up of physical exercise; and if he will make a statement. [60721]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Availability and take up of PE is dependant on a whole range of factors including what facilities are provided and other competing regime demands. The Prison Service is committed to maximising the use and prisoner take up of PE facilities.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the Prison Service's *(a)* catering and *(b)* physical education service. [60722]

Fiona Mactaggart: Providing meals and physical exercise for prisoners are key parts of a prisons regime. In 2004–05 the Prison Service served over 80 million meals and delivered over eight million hours of physical education while meeting the diverse needs of prisoners. Wherever possible both services provide purposeful activity and accredited training to help prisoners resettle into the community.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates in *(a)* Coldingly, *(b)* Chelmsford, *(c)* Elmley, *(d)* Rochester, *(e)* Wormwood Scrubs, *(f)* Holloway and *(g)* Belmarsh prisons were found to be in the possession of drugs in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and what quantity of drugs was seized in each prison in each year. [60857]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Security Industry Authority

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will revise the Security Industry Authority application procedure so that those who have submitted supporting documentation for one class of licence and have had those documents accepted do not have to resubmit the same items with a different class of licence application; and if he will make a statement. [55239]

Paul Goggins: Operational responsibility for licensing the private security industry lies with the Security Industry Authority (SIA), and it is for them to decide whether and how they might amend the application procedure. Since mid February the SIA have been working with CCTV and vehicle immobiliser companies to avoid them having to provide ID documents where an individual already has either a licence or an application which has already been checked and accepted, and where there have been no change of name or address.

In these circumstances the SIA process applications through their temporary processing centre and only require an application form and details of the previous application. The SIA are currently extending this facility to security companies who may also have staff who require a second licence.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Security Industry Authority (SIA) licences have been issued to personnel working in alarm control centres; and how many SIA licence applications are yet to be processed. [60534]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 March 2006]*: Individuals who undertake specific licensable activities in Remote Video Recording Centres but who do not pro-actively monitor members of the public may be licensable as security guards. Because RVRC is not a separate licensable sector it is not possible to provide this information.

Summonses

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many summonses were issued in Swindon as a result of test-purchase operations or visits for alcohol offences other than selling alcohol to minors and those already under the influence of alcohol between 12 November 2004 and 24 December 2005. [60993]

Paul Goggins: Information on test-purchase operations and visits to licensed premises is not routinely collected by the Home Office. However, in the course of specific campaigns to tackle the misuse of alcohol, the Police Standards Unit collected data on test-purchase operations and visits carried out between: *(a)* 17 December 2004 and 3 January 2005, and *(b)* 14 November 2005 and 31 December 2005. No records were found of any test-purchase operations or visits in Swindon for the period 17 December 2004 to 3 January 2005. Between 14 November 2005 and 31 December 2005,10 test-purchase operations were carried out in Swindon, but no visits. No offences of any kind were detected during these test-purchase operations, and therefore no summonses were issued.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many summonses were issued in Swindon as a result of *(a)* test-purchase operations and *(b)* visits for selling alcohol to people already under the influence of alcohol between 12 November 2004 and 24 December 2005. [60639]

Hazel Blears: Information on test-purchase operations and visits to licensed premises is not routinely collected by the Home Office. However, in the course of specific campaigns to tackle the misuse of alcohol, the Police Standards Unit collected data on test-purchase operations and visits carried out between *(a)* 17 December 2004 and 3 January 2005, and *(b)* 14 November 2005 and 31 December 2005.

No records were found of any test-purchase operations or visits in Swindon for the period 17 December 2004 to 3 January 2005. Between 14 November 2005 and 31 December 2005, 10 test-purchase operations were carried out in Swindon, but no visits. No offences of any kind were detected during these test-purchase operations, and therefore no summonses were issued.

Young Persons in Care

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost to the police service of action in response to a report to the police of a young person missing from a care establishment. [57559]

Hazel Blears: We have made no such estimate. Lancashire Constabulary has produced an estimate for the cost of a typical missing person's investigation, which they put at around £1,000 per investigation.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the Afghan provinces where opium poppy cultivation has decreased since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [61237]

Mr. Straw: The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan. UNODC figures for 2005 show that the level of opium cultivation decreased over 2001 figures in Kabul, Logar and Paktya provinces. However, comparing current levels of cultivation with 2001 figures does not represent an accurate picture of total progress to date. This is because the base year coincided with the Taliban's prohibition on opium cultivation. While the ban was effective in reducing the area of land under poppy cultivation in 2001, the Taliban did nothing to provide alternatives to poppy farmers who consequently suffered considerable hardship. Furthermore, the ban did not apply to trafficking or processing activities and the Taliban regime manipulated the drug trade to benefit from the rise in prices, which resulted from the reduction in cultivation.

Since the fall of the Taliban, the Government of Afghanistan has, with the support of the international community, made considerable progress in fighting narcotics. Last year UNODC reported a 21 per cent. reduction in poppy cultivation from 131,000 hectares (ha) in 2003–04 to 104,000 ha in 2004–05, with decreases recorded in a total of 19 provinces. More recently, the Government of Afghanistan has updated its National Drug Control Strategy to ensure the downward trend is sustained over time and that progress is also made in targeting the trafficker, developing legal rural livelihoods, reducing domestic demand and developing strong and effective institutions. Sustainable drug elimination strategies take time, but I believe that the National Drug Control Strategy represents the best means of making a sustainable impact on the trade in the medium term.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the arrest of an Afghan citizen for converting to Christianity. [61867]

Dr. Howells: On 22 March 2006, I made a public statement expressing the Government's concern over the charges against Mr. Rahman. I am deeply troubled by the reports of this case. Individuals should be able to practice their faith or beliefs free from persecution. We take every opportunity to urge states to implement laws and practices which foster tolerance and mutual respect.

Mr. Rahman has been released.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights observance in Afghanistan, with particular reference to the freedom of religion. [61868]

Dr. Howells: Although much progress has been made since the fall of the Taliban, the human rights situation in Afghanistan remains challenging. The Afghan Constitution provides for the protection of human rights and Article 2 provides for freedom of religion. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission monitors respect for human rights and protects them. Afghanistan has acceded to the six main International Human Rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantees freedom of religion. We take cases of religious persecution seriously and make known our concerns to the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), both bilaterally and through the EU.

In 2005, the GoA adopted the National Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, which sets out a three-year comprehensive strategy on transitional justice and endorsed a strategic framework for justice sector reform entitled "Justice for All". The latter framework is divided into five areas of activity: law reform, institution-building, access to justice programs, traditional justice and co-ordination.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made to the Afghan government following the conviction of Abdul Rahman for the crime of apostasy. [62055]

Dr. Howells: On 22 March, I made a public statement expressing the Government's concerns over the charges facing Mr. Rahman. I am deeply troubled by the reports of this case. Individuals should be able to practice their faith or beliefs free from persecution. We take every opportunity to urge states to implement laws and practices which foster tolerance and mutual respect.

On 23 March my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs (Ian Pearson), summoned the Afghan Chargé, to relay our concerns. On the same day our ambassador in Kabul raised our concerns direct with the Afghan government.

Mr. Rahman has been released.

Askariya Shrine

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support and assistance the UK Government are providing for the reconstruction of the Askariya shrine in Samara; and if he will make a statement. [61138]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said on 23 February, the Government stand ready to contribute to the reconstruction of the Shrine site. We will be guided on how best we do this by our friends within the Muslim communities in Iraq and Britain.

Capita Group

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many tenders *(a)* Capita plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries have submitted to his Department in each of the last three years; and how many tenders were successful. [61436]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has no record of any tenders submitted by Capita plc in 2004. Out of five tenders submitted in 2005 by Capita plc, three were successful. Capita submitted one tender in 2006. This was unsuccessful.

The FCO has no record of any tenders submitted by subsidiaries of Capita plc in the last three years.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many contracts his Department holds with *(a)* Capita plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries which have a potential duration of five years or more. [61437]

Mr. Straw: None.

Egypt

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that British citizens were tortured while in detention in Egypt. [58799]

Dr. Howells: We condemn the use of torture and take any allegations of torture or mistreatment extremely seriously. My hon. Friend the former Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Chris Mullin) and my noble Friend the former Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State (right hon. Baroness Symons), have each raised with the Egyptian Foreign Minister claims of torture made by British citizens held in detention in Egypt.

Eritrea

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Eritrea about expulsion of United Nations negotiators from that country; and if he will make a statement. [61772]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, summoned the Eritrean ambassador on 9 December 2005 to make clear the EU's concern about Eritrea's decision to expel monitors of certain nationalities serving with the UN Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). We also supported a UN Security Council Presidential Statement, which declared that the Eritrean action was unacceptable and demanded its immediate and unequivocal reversal without preconditions. The full text of the statement can be found on the UN website at: http://daccessdds.un.orR/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/643/03/PDF/N0564303.pdf?OpenElement. We continue to urge both parties to implement the boundary commission's decision and demarcate their common frontier and for Eritrea to lift its restrictions on UNMEE and allow it to fulfil its mandate.

Indonesia

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in Indonesia. [61017]

Ian Pearson: The human rights situation in Indonesia has improved considerably in the last few years. Indonesia has a flourishing free media and an increasingly liberal and plural political environment and a democratically elected President and Parliament. The successful peace process in Aceh is an indication of the Government's willingness to resolve long-standing conflicts.

There are sporadic incidents of inter-religious violence in certain religiously mixed areas which have adversely affected both Christians and Muslims. However, these have decreased in recent years and the Government of Indonesia is working to ensure good inter-communal relations, including by working with Muslim and Christian community leaders to reduce tensions. In September 2005, President Yudhoyono stressed that the state guaranteed every citizen religious freedom and called on the police and public to act to prevent violence against any faith.

We raise reports of human rights abuses in Papua with the Indonesian Government, and encourage them to allow access to the province for journalists.

Iran

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the UK spent on promoting democracy in Iran in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [56111]

Mr. Straw: Encouraging respect for human rights and political freedoms is a key element of our approach towards Iran. We do not take sides in Iran's internal political debates—these are for Iranians themselves to resolve—but seek to promote the internationally recognised principles to which many Iranians aspire including freedom of speech and transparent, genuinely democratic and accountable government.

In line with long-standing EU policy, we are committed to supporting political reform. We continue to support the development of governmental and non-governmental organisations where opportunities arise. We do not publicise the details without the consent of our Iranian partners. The EU has allocated around £4.4 million to projects in Iran under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. Three projects, to which the EU has allocated a total of £2.9 million, are implemented by United Nations agencies. A further lm project was launched in January 2005.

Remedying the deficiencies in the democratic process will be a long-term process. In our private dialogue and public statements we continue to press the Iranian authorities on the need for reform. As I made clear in my speech to the International Institute of Strategic Studies on 13 March, this is an area where I believe the UK and EU should become more active.

Iraq

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with Iraqi *(a)* officials and *(b)* leaders on the establishment of the new government. [62132]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary maintains regular telephone contact with Iraqi political leaders. He last visited Iraq on 20–21 February. He met a broad range of key political figures involved in the negotiations on the formation of a new government, including President Talabani, Prime Minister Ja'afari and leaders of the main Kurdish, Sunni Arab and Shia parties.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether station heads in Iraq have advised his Department that shipments of arms exported to Iraq from the United Kingdom may have been diverted to Al-Qaeda operatives. [61882]

Dr. Howells: We are not aware of any official reports of UK supplied equipment being diverted to insurgents. We are, however, aware of media reports alleging that part of a consignment of used Italian police pistols, delivered to Iraq via a UK company, fell into the hands of insurgents.

All UK licences are assessed for the risk of diversion against the EU and National Consolidated Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Where the risk is considered too high a licence will not be issued. Arms are needed in Iraq to allow the Government of Iraq and the Multinational Force to effectively carry out their roles. Without these arms, their functions would be seriously affected.

Libya

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much trade and investment has been agreed with Libya since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [60214]

Dr. Howells: UK Trade and Investment provides a full range of services to British companies wishing to trade with or invest in Libya, through commercial teams based in both the UK and the our embassy in Tripoli. This includes inward and outward trade missions, trade fairs and the provision of up-to-date information on the business environment in Libya.

There are no official figures on the level of British investment in Libya, neither are there figures for invisible exports to the country. However, over 50 UK-based companies have established branch offices in Libya in order to pursue their trade and investment interests. Visible exports from Britain were worth over £210 million in 2005, a slight fall on the figure of £216 million recorded in 2004. British trade and investment is focused primarily on Libya's rapidly developing oil and gas sector, in which Shell has a major stake. In May 2005, Shell reached agreement on a major gas exploration and development deal with Libya's National Oil Company, which will involve a minimum investment of around US $300 million, by far the biggest investment in Libya by a British company.

Maldives

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of recent democratic reforms in the Maldives pursuant to the road maps announced by President Gayoom; and if he will make a statement. [61177]

Dr. Howells: We strongly support continued democratic reform in the Maldives. We have been regularly encouraging the Government of the Maldives to quickly put in place a clear, time-bound framework with objectives and milestones for further progress. We hope the road-map that President Gayoom referred to at the official opening of the Maldivian Parliament on 23 February will provide this. We understand the road-map is due to be published by the end of March 2006.

We welcome the important democratic changes that the Government of the Maldives have already introduced, including the legalisation of political parties in June 2005.

Much remains to be done. Agreement on and implementation of further major democratic and constitutional changes will require an inclusive process reflecting the views of political parties, civil society and the general public in the Maldives. Dialogue between the political parties is essential. We fully support the work of the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy and the Commonwealth Secretariat in facilitating dialogue on constitutional reform between the political parties.

A genuine commitment to democracy requires all stakeholders to live up to the spirit as well as the letter of reform. We continue to urge the Government to do all in their power to remove potential obstacles to dialogue, including addressing the issue of legal actions which are seen to be politically motivated. Officials did so when they met the Maldivian Foreign Minister Dr. Ahmed Shaheed in London on 21 March. We also regularly urge the opposition to engage constructively, within the law and the current constitution.

Mujahedin-e Khalq

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last made representations to the European Union on the continued proscription of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation; and if he will make a statement. [61656]

Dr. Howells: The Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation (MEK) is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the United Kingdom. The MEK appears on the list of persons, groups and entities which are subject to restrictive measures with a view to combating terrorism under Council Regulation 2580/2001-EC. The Court of First Instance of the European Communities is currently scrutinising the process by which the MEK was included on that list, and the UK has made representations to the Court. Judgment in that case is awaited.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what security arrangements are in place for members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation at Camp Ashraf in Iraq; [61661]

(2) what plans he has assessed for the protection of Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation members at Camp Ashraf when the UK and the US disengage from Iraq. [61665]

Dr. Howells: The Iraqi Government is responsible for the security of Camp Ashraf in Iraq. At their request, Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) currently provide perimeter security at the camp. The Iraqi Government will remain responsible for the protection of Camp Ashraf when the MNF-I leaves Iraq.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Mujahedin-e Khalq since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. [61663]

Dr. Howells: The Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the United Kingdom. It is Government policy that Ministers and officials do not have contact with proscribed groups.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation that have been disarmed by coalition forces in Iraq since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. [61664]

Dr. Howells: Since April 2003, approximately 4,000 Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation members have been disarmed by US forces at a number of locations in Iraq.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom concerning the Foreign Affairs Committee report on the Human Rights Annual Report 2005; and if he will make a statement. [62046]

Ian Pearson: Officials regularly meet representatives from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is to discuss the deteriorating situation faced by Baha'is in Iran. In addition, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is attended a meeting on 23 March of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) advisory panel on religious freedom. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is has also discussed the written evidence that they gave to the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) with officials from the FCO. We understand that the Baha'i Assembly is concerned that some elements of the evidence they submitted to the FAC appear to have been misinterpreted. Baha'i representatives noted that they supported the overall tone of the FCO Annual Human Rights Report as well as Government policy with respect to human rights in Iran.

Sudan

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the government of Sudan to ensure that *(a)* Ms Amouna Mohamed Ahmed, *(b)* Ms Fayza Ismail Abaker, *(c)* Ms Houda Ismail Abdel Rahman and *(d)* Ms Zahra Adam Abdella, who were arrested on 7 March, are properly treated in custody and receive a fair trial. [61409]

Ian Pearson: We are in close contact with the UN and Human Rights groups about the case of four women detained in El Serief camp on 7 March. The UN have confirmed that the four women have not been physically abused and have access to their lawyer and family. The Sudanese Organisation against Torture, which is partly funded by the UK, is providing free legal aid to the women. We have also instructed our Embassy in Khartoum to make representations to the Government of Sudan on this case.

Venezuela

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Venezuelan Government on political prisoners in Venezuela. [60906]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have had no discussions about political prisoners in Venezuela with the Venezuelan Government. However, we have regular exchanges with the Venezuelan Government and other political institutions in the country, including civil society organisations, about the development of democracy and protection of human rights in Venezuela.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Bed Tax

Tim Farron: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the implications for tourist businesses of the Lyons Inquiry recommendation that people staying in hotels and bed-and-breakfast accommodation should pay a bed tax; and what assessment he has made of the representations on this recommendation from the tourist industry. [61894]

Mr. Woolas: The Lyons Inquiry has made no such recommendation.

Business Growth Incentive Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the intended purpose is of the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme. [61352]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) was designed to provide an incentive for local authorities to promote economic growth in their area, by allowing them to be rewarded for an increase in business rateable value, above a certain threshold level.

Controlled Parking Zones

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each London local authority spent on consultation on controlled parking zones *(a)* in each year since 1997 and *(b)* in each month since May 2003. [61887]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether billing authorities are able to levy backdated interest on *(a)* late council tax payments and *(b)* retrospective payments made as a result of a council tax discount being incorrectly claimed. [59127]

Mr. Woolas: No interest is payable on late council tax payments or any retrospective payments. A system to include interest payments could be operated only at disproportionate cost. Equally, no interest is payable on council tax overpayments.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to review the operation of student council tax exemption. [60944]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Working Group for Local Government Financial Statistics, which comprises representatives of central and local Government, will consider the student council tax exemption figures used for grant calculation purposes.

Sir Michael Lyons's Independent Inquiry into Local Government is reviewing the council tax system, including discounts and exemptions. The inquiry is due to report by December 2006.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to reduce the council tax exemption threshold for people serving apprenticeships. [61250]

Mr. Woolas: A full council tax bill assumes that there are at least two adults living in a dwelling. Where there is only one adult living in the dwelling the overall bill is reduced by 25 per cent. Certain people are disregarded for the purposes of calculating the household's bill. In the case of apprentices the disregard is in part dependent on their earning less than a prescribed level of income. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will shortly be consulting on whether the apprentice earnings limit should be increased and, if so, by how much.

Fire Precaution Regulations

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many prohibition notices were issued by the fire and rescue services in England in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended) and section 10 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 (as amended) in each year since 1997, broken down by issuing authority. [61893]

Jim Fitzpatrick: All prohibition and restriction of use notices are issued under section 10 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971. The effect of Regulation 12 of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended) is to extend the scope of section 10 of the 1971 Act to cover tents and other moveable structures where people are employed to work; and places of work in the open air .

Information on prohibition notices issued by the fire and rescue services in England in accordance with section 10 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 (as amended) is available centrally from 1998–99.

The information presented is 'as reported' to ODPM by fire and rescue services on the annual FSR4F return.

Number of notices served by fire and rescue authorities prohibiting or restricting the use of premises

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Avon	0	1	0	4	1	0	0
Bedfordshire and Luton	0	1	4	1	1	0	0
Buckinghamshire	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Cambridgeshire	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Cheshire	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Cleveland	1	6	1	0	4	2	0
Cornwall	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
County Durham and Darlington	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cumbria	4	0	0	0	4	0	1
Derbyshire	2	1	3	5	9	6	8
Devon	1	0	1	1	6	2	6
Dorset	1	1	0	4	1	3	3
East Sussex	1	0	—	2	0	2	1
Essex	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Gloucestershire	0	1	0	1	0	2	0
Greater Manchester	3	12	19	188	121	85	74
Hampshire	2	0	1	3	1	4	10
Hereford and Worcester	7	2	2	0	0	0	0
Hertfordshire	1	0	0	0	0	9	4
Humberside	1	1	0	4	3	1	1
Isle of Wight	2	2	0	6	0	0	0
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	1	1	7	4	2	0	3
Lancashire	6	5	11	7	6	14	12
Leicestershire	0	0	0	1	0	4	0
Lincolnshire	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	2
London	11	36	14	14	28	22	34
Merseyside	3	1	0	0	2	0	1
Norfolk	0	1	3	11	6	2	4
North Yorkshire	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Northamptonshi[illegible]	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Northumberla[illegible]	0	0	0	0	1	0	n/a
Nottinghamshire	5	2	2	0	1	4	2
Oxfordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Royal Berkshire	11	3	9	13	11	5	n/a
Shropshire	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Somerset	0	2	1	0	1	0	0
South Yorkshire	1	0	2	1	0	7	1
Staffordshire	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Suffolk	1	1	2	2	6	0	4
Surrey	9	8	6	6	18	12	12
Tyne and Wear	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Warwickshire	2	2	10	2	3	1	0
West Midlands	4	2	8	11	8	10	11
West Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Number of notices served by fire and rescue authorities prohibiting or restricting the use of premises

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
West Yorkshire	19	19	22	22	12	8	3
Wiltshire	0	0	0	0	7	1	1
	104	112	131	314	264	215	214

n/a = Not available

[1] Provisional

Source:

Annual returns from fire and rescue services

Home Buyers Packs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to bring forward secondary legislation to allow public sector bodies to have access to the new register of home condition reports. [59130]

Yvette Cooper: The only people who will have access to the registers of home condition reports will be buyers and sellers, their advisers and mortgage lenders and those monitoring the performance and quality of the reports. The secondary legislation will be framed accordingly.

Iraqi/Afghan Communities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many meetings he has had with representatives of *(a)* Iraqi and *(b)* Afghan communities living in the UK in each of the last three years. [54765]

Mr. Woolas: The information is not collected centrally.

The Deputy Prime Minister has a wide range and number of meetings in his role as Deputy Prime Minister, First Secretary of State, Member of Parliament and Constituency MP.

The Government aims to achieve constructive dialogue with the broad range of faith communities and is supporting and encouraging interfaith and multi-faith activities and dialogue.

Local Government Expenditure

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of local government total assumed spending was made up of specific grants in each year since 1997–98; and what the estimated figure is for 2006–07. [60117]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of local government revenue expenditure financed by specific grants in each year since 1997–98 to 2005–06 is tabled as follows. The information requested for 2006–07 is not available yet.

	Percentage of local government revenue expenditure
1997–98	4
1998–99	5
1999–2000	5
2000–01	8
2001–02	11
2002–03	14
2003–04	18
2004–05	18
2005–06	15

Source:

Revenue Summary (RS) returns to 2004–05 and Revenue Accounts (RA) budget returns for 2005–06.

The table is presented on a non-financial reporting standard 17 (FRS17) basis.

The definition of local government revenue expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from aggregate external finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves. AEF is Central Government revenue funding that comprises Formula grant (Revenue Support Grant, Redistributed business rates and Police Grant), General Greater London Authority (GLA) Grant and specific grants inside AEF, i.e. revenue grants paid for council's core services. The definition of specific grants used here is the specific grants inside AEF.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities.

Local Government Restructuring

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what meetings *(a)* he has and *(b)* Ministers in his Department have had with the Prime Minister concerning local government restructuring. [60129]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister meets the Prime Minister regularly to discuss a wide range of issues. Ministers from his Department also attend meetings with the Prime Minister at which a variety of issues are raised.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the planning process is for applications for new *(a)* pico cell, *(b)* micro cell and *(c)* macro cell mobile phone masts; [60126]

(2) whether planning permission is required to upgrade a 2G/2.5G mobile phone mast to 3G. [60124]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The terms picocell, microcell and macrocell are industry terms to distinguish different types of radio base stations. However, there is no industry standard or agreement on the specific types of base station to which each term applies and therefore these terms are not helpful for determining whether planning permission is required or not.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

In general terms a picocell is typically smaller than a microcell, although the distinction is not always clear. Picocell base stations are usually used to extend coverage to indoor areas where outdoor signals do not reach well, or to add network capacity in areas with very dense phone usage, such as train stations. The planning system cannot extend to changes inside a building unless there are internal features which have been listed. Other picocells antenna and small microcell antenna might be considered "de minimis", i.e. it does not have a material effect on the external appearance of the building or structure on which it is installed and therefore will not require planning permission.

Otherwise all electronic communications development will require planning permission unless it is development permitted by Part 24 of the "Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995", as amended. Whether planning permission is required to upgrade an existing mobile phone mast to a 3G mobile phone mast will need to be determined on a case by case basis.

It should be noted that simply because small developments may not need planning permission it does not mean that there is no public consultation. The code of best practice that was produced jointly by central and local government and the mobile phone industry is clear that every potential site is rated using the Traffic Light Model. This model determines the level of public consultation that will be required if the site is selected for the installation.

Muslim Communities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many meetings he has had with representatives of *(a)* UK Muslim communities and *(b)* UK Muslim youth groups in each of the last three years. [54764]

Mr. Woolas: This information is not collected centrally.

The Deputy Prime Minister has a wide range and number of meetings in his role as Deputy Prime Minister, First Secretary of State, Member of Parliament and Constituency MP.

The Government aims to achieve constructive dialogue with the broad range of faith communities and is supporting and encouraging interfaith and multi-faith activities and dialogue.

Pavement Maintenance

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each London local authority spent on maintaining pavements in each year since 1997. [61885]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each London local authority spent on compensation for injuries caused by damaged pavements in each year since 1997. [61886]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Public Relations/Advertising

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each London local authority spent on public relations and advertising *(a)* in each year since 1997 and *(b)* in each month since May 2003. [61888]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regional Bodies

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the staff of regional bodies are *(a)* male and *(b)* female. [60020]

Mr. Woolas: For the Government offices for the region I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 528W.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold the information requested about any other regional bodies, this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Voluntary and Community Sectors (Funding)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if his Department will increase the funding it makes available to the voluntary and community sectors. [61173]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister already makes a significant amount of funding available to the voluntary and community sectors, including through local area agreements, community empowerment networks, groundwork federation, special grants programme and new deal for communities.

We have no current plans to increase funding to the voluntary and community sectors.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Agri-environment Programme

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated for the agri-environment programme in 2006–07; and how much has been spent on the programme to date. [62075]

Angela E. Smith: The agri-environment budget for the current scheme year, which commenced on 16 October 2005, is £12.25 million. Expenditure to date totals £5.4 million.

City of Derry

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library a copy of all the legal advice received by the Department of the Environment since 26 March 2003 regarding the official name of the City of Derry. [58624]

Angela E. Smith: It is not the Government's practice to disclose legal advice.

Cleaner Neighbourhoods

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the cleaner neighbourhoods consultation to commence; what format he expects it to take; and if he will make a statement. [61490]

Angela E. Smith: An initial cleaner neighbourhoods consultation document seeking views on a range of local environmental quality issues in Northern Ireland is expected to be issued by the Department of Environment by the end of May 2006.

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what recent assessment he has made of coastal erosion around Northern Ireland; [59607]

(2) what assessment he has made of the incidence of coastal erosion around Northern Ireland. [59876]

Angela E. Smith: A comprehensive report on "Implications for Climate Change for Northern Ireland: Informing Strategy Development", published in 2002 by the Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER), examined the likely impacts of climate change across a wide range of sectors, including coastal impacts. Findings included loss of intertidal areas of open coasts, loss of marshes with associated habitat and erosion of dune coasts.

The DOE has recently commissioned SNIFFER to provide an updated report. The study will incorporate a risk assessment and will recommend adaptation strategies for the key impacts identified. Coastal impacts will be included. The work is due to be completed by the end of 2006. It will also help inform Northern Ireland's input into wider UK policy.

Coastal erosion is a natural phenomenon and no overall assessment of its incidence has been made but the relevant statutory agencies do monitor and, where necessary, respond to incidences of such erosion which might affect services for which they are responsible.

Draft Planning Policy Statement 14

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the impact of draft Planning Policy Statement 14 on small rural building contractors. [62086]

Mr. Woodward: The Department carried out a wide-ranging public consultation during the preparation of draft Planning Policy Statement 14—"Sustainable Development in the Countryside" which included an invitation to public consultation through the publication of an Issues Paper in June 2004. As part of the follow-up process, officials met with a range of groups and political parties, including the Construction Employers Federation.

Forkhill Site

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultation has taken place with the people of Forkhill, County Armagh regarding the future use of the former army and police base site. [60412]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

Officials from the Defence Estates, the MOD agency with responsibility for the defence estate, met Northern Ireland Office officials and other local representatives on 16 January 2006 to discuss the disposal of the former Army and police base at Forkhill and other sites in Northern Ireland.

Although interest has been expressed in the site by the Northern Ireland Social Development Office no decisions on future use have yet been taken. However, the opportunity was taken to explain the normal procedures that must be followed by MOD in the disposal of this and other sites in Northern Ireland that we have declared surplus to operational requirements.

Planning

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time taken to process planning applications in Northern Ireland was in January *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 2006. [59947]

Angela E. Smith: It took an average of 31 weeks to process planning applications on which decisions issued in January 2005 and 36.5 weeks to process those applications on which decisions issued in January 2006.

Processing times have increased but this should be set in the context that there was an increase of over 13 per cent. (2,942 decisions) in the number of decisions issued between April 2005 and January 2006 compared to the number of decisions issued in the same period the previous year.

Rateable Values (New Build)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many newly-built properties in Northern Ireland were waiting to have their rateable value calculated as at 1 March 2006. [57096]

Angela E. Smith: The Valuation and Lands Agency is notified by local authority building controls when construction commences on a new property and after allowing some nine months for completion, the Agency lists the new properties for valuation.

At 1 March 2006 there were 9,742 such listings being actioned or awaiting action on final completion of construction. This is an historically high figure reflecting the fact the Agency is in the process of finalising the new capital value based rateable values for all 700,000 domestic properties in Northern Ireland, which are due to be published at the end of June this year. The hon. Member may be interested to note that the Agency values, on average, some 15,300 new properties per annum.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what average length of time was taken to calculate the rateable values of newly-built properties in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what steps are being taken to reduce the time. [57101]

Angela E. Smith: The precise data that the hon. Member has requested is not available. The Valuation and Lands Agency does, however, focus on the critical time period for ratepayers: the gap between the date of occupation and the date of valuation assessment and billing. The Agency, recognising the ratepayer's desire to avoid substantial demands for backdated rates, has for many years targeted its performance on this time period, striving to improve the overall outcome.

The current target is to issue at least 90 per cent. of all those rating revision cases (excluding domestic alterations), which are subject to retrospective backdating, within 12 months of the revision date. The out-turn for this key target over the last five years is as follows.

	Percentage
2000–01	93
2001–02	94
2002–03	92
2003–04	Not reported on[1]
2004–05	90

[1] This was the year following the publication of the 2003 non-domestic revaluation when backdating was limited by statute to 1 April 2003.

Conscious of the importance of achieving early and accurate valuation and billing for all stakeholders—ratepayers, local authorities and Government—the Agency has sought not merely to improve on these figures but to achieve a "step change" in performance. To this end the Agency, in April 2005, entered into a joint project with Belfast city council (building control) for the timely provision by the council of full survey details on all changes to properties (including new builds).

In Belfast this project has significantly reduced the average time involvement by the Agency and increased productivity almost threefold. No comparable "backdating" figures are yet available, but a substantial improvement is anticipated.

We are currently in the process of extending the project to include Derry and Lisburn city councils later in 2006 and eventually, by agreement, to all councils.

Roads Maintenance Budget

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the effect on the construction and aggregates industry of changes in the roads maintenance budget. [62085]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 28 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what assessment has been made of the effect of changes in the roads maintenance budget on the construction and aggregates industry.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

In doing so I should perhaps explain that in the last 3 years a total of some £735m has been spent on developing and maintaining the road network in Northern Ireland. Some £495m has been invested in revenue activities, including maintenance, with a further £240m on capital. Over the next 10 years the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland envisages that some £1.9 billion will be invested in road improvements subject to the availability of resources in future budget rounds, economic appraisals and statutory approvals.

Expenditure this year, coupled with the Revised Budget allocations, suggests that about £170m will be invested in roads' structural maintenance in the three years to 2007/08. When assessing budget figures, a single year's allocation is of course important, but it is also important to see these figures over a cycle.

You may be aware that the Minister for Regional Development, Shaun Woodward MP recently met with your colleague Margaret Ritchie MLA and members of the local Quarry Products Association (QPA) to discuss the outcome of the Budget and Priorities 2006–2008 and the impact on the structural maintenance budget. In addition senior officials from Roads Service have also held a number of meetings with the QPA.

I fully appreciate the concerns of the road building industry about the funding for structural maintenance and can assure you that Roads Service will be making a strong case for an increase in the structural maintenance budget to the Department of Finance and Personnel as part of the input to the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

In the interim, we will continue to make the best use of our resources to develop and maintain the road network.

I hope this information is helpful.

Vacant Commercial Premises

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much additional revenue he expects to be raised in Northern Ireland in each year following the decision to cease exemption for rates on vacant commercial premises. [61621]

Angela E. Smith: The rating of vacant commercial property was introduced on 1 April 2004. The revenue raised in 2004–05 was £5 million, of which £2.8 million was in respect of regional rate, with the balance being in respect of the district rate.

For 2006–07 and 2007–08, the recent priorities and budget process contains forecast revenue for the regional rate element of £2.9 million and £3.0 million respectively. The figures for the district rate element will depend on the increases determined by the individual district councils.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Payment

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is the Government's intention that eventually all distinctions should be abolished between the benefits paid to people who are capable of work and those who are incapable of work. [60625]

Mr. Plaskitt: We want a simpler and more transparent benefits system and aim to remove any distinctions that are not necessary to reflect real differences in capacity to work or financial need. Our Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work" set out our longer-term vision of a single gateway to financial and back to work support for all claimants and a single system of working age benefits, with appropriate additions for people who have a long-term illness or disability.

Benefit Recipients

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* housing benefit and *(b)* council tax benefit recipients are in receipt of earned income. [61051]

Mr. Plaskitt: The most recent available information is for May 2004; at that date, there were 300,000 housing benefit households and 277,000 council tax benefit households declaring earned income.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* housing benefit and *(b)* council tax benefit recipients are in receipt of incapacity benefit at (i) the short term lower rate, (ii) the short term higher rate and are terminally ill, (iii) the short term higher rate and are not terminally ill and (iv) the long term rate. [61052]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information is not available broken down to identify those with terminal illnesses. The most recent available information is in the table.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit households declaring an income from incapacity benefit; by rate of incapacity benefit: Great Britain, May 2004

Rate of incapacity benefit	*Housing benefit*	*Council tax benefit*
Short term—lower	22,000	26,000
Short term—higher	21,000	27,000
Long term	368,000	440,000

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.
2. Housing benefit and council tax benefit data refers to households and may be a single person or a couple.
3. Housing benefit figures exclude any Extended Payment cases.
4. Council tax benefit figures exclude any Single Adult Rebate cases.
5. Figures refer to cases where the claimant and/or partner have income declared from incapacity benefit but they exclude credits-only incapacity benefit cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2004.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Torbay unitary authority and *(b)* Torbay parliamentary constituency received (i) housing benefit, (ii) income support and (iii) council tax benefit in each year since 1997. [61511]

Mr. Plaskitt: Housing benefit and council tax benefit information is not available broken down by parliamentary constituency. The available information is in the tables.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit recipients in the Torbay council area: each August from 1997 to 2005

	Housing benefit	*Council tax benefit*
1997	10,400	13,500
1998	10,400	13,300
1999	9,200	12,000
2000	9,100	12,000
2001	9,100	12,100
2002	9,100	12,100
2003	9,500	12,500
2004	9,700	13,400
2005	9,700	13,700

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. HB/CTB data refer to households and may be a single person or a couple.
3. HB figures exclude any extended payment cases.
4. CTB figures exclude any single adult rebate cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. case load stock-count taken between August 1997 and August 2005.

Income support recipients in the Torbay council area and in the Torbay parliamentary constituency: each August from 1997 to 2005

	Torbay council	*Torbay parliamentary constituency*
1997	6,400	4,800
1998	6,300	4,800
1999	6,000	4,600
2000	5,900	4,500
2001	6,000	4,600
2002	5,900	4,600
2003	5,900	4,600
2004	5,800	4,500
2005	5,700	4,400

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures for 1997 and 1998 have been derived by applying 5 per cent. proportions to 100 per cent. WPLS totals.
3. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003. MIG cases have been excluded from the figures to keep the time series consistent.

Source:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Benefits (Transitional Relief)

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on which occasions since 1990 transitional relief has been provided as part of a benefit rule change. [60226]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made using the Government's standard measure of the number of households paying council tax which are in poverty;[56889]

(2) what estimate he has made using the Government's standard measure of the number of children in poverty who are in council tax paying households. [56890]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators. The report includes headline indicators on the number and proportion of children and adults living in low income households, also published in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95—2004–05", available in the Library.

The figures given in the tables show people who are paying any amount of council tax, many of them will be receiving some council tax benefit but not the full amount.

(i) The estimate of the number of households that report paying council tax, with incomes below 60 per cent. of contemporary median—a measure of 'relative' low income—are presented in the table.

Number of households with incomes less than 60 per cent. of contemporary median paying council tax, 2004–05, Great Britain

	Paying council tax and in relative low income	*All relative low income households*	*All households*
Before housing costs	2,800,000	4,100,000	24,600,000
After housing costs	3,100,000	4,800,000	24,600,000

The estimate of the number of households that report paying council tax, with incomes below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 GB median—a measure of 'absolute' low income—are presented in the table.

Number of households with incomes less than 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median paying council tax, 2004–05, Great Britain

	Paying council tax and in absolute low income	*All absolute low income households*	*All households*
Before housing costs	1,800,000	2,400,000	24,600,000
After housing costs	1,900,000	3,000,000	24,600,000

(ii) The estimate of the number of children living in households that report paying council tax, with incomes below 60 per cent. of contemporary median—a measure of 'relative' low income—are presented in the table.

Number of children living in households with incomes less than 60 per cent. of contemporary median paying council tax, 2004–05, Great Britain

	Paying council tax and in relative low income	*All relative low income households*	*All children*
Before housing costs	1,500,000	2,400,000	12,600,000
After housing costs	1,900,000	3,400,000	12,600,000

The estimate of the number of children living in households that report paying council tax, with incomes below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 GB median—a measure of 'absolute' low income—are presented in the table.

Number of children living in households with incomes less than 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median paying council tax, 2004–05, Great Britain

	Paying council tax and in absolute low income	*All absolute low income households*	*All children*
Before housing costs	900,000	1,400,000	12,600,000
After housing costs	1,100,000	1,900,000	12,600,000

Notes:

1. Households 'paying council tax' includes households in receipt of a partial council tax benefit award.
2. Figures rounded to the nearest 100 thousand.
3. Incomes below 60 per cent. of contemporary median is a measure of 'relative' low income.
4. Incomes below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 GB median—a measure of 'absolute' low income.

Source:

Family Resources Survey

Departmental Policies

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Islington, South and Finsbury constituency, the effects on Islington, South and Finsbury of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [60737]

Margaret Hodge: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Islington South and Finsbury will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2004–05 we estimate there were over 10 million disabled people (around 9.7 million adults and 0.7 million children) in Great Britain. All of these people would meet the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which show that 15 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in London are disabled.

Information on the numbers of customers in Islington South and Finsbury who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the following table.

Islington South and Finsbury

		Operational year		*Percentage*
	2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
DLA recipients	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.5
AA recipients	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are displayed in thousands.
2. DLA is from a 100 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.
3. AA is from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. Since 1997 the number of people claiming as unemployed in Islington South and Finsbury has fallen by 47 per cent. and the number of long-term unemployed by 81 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.5 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with over 3,000 in Islington South and Finsbury alone.

Significant progress has been made in tackling child poverty. Since 1998–99 the number of children in relative low-income households fell by 700,000 from 3.1 million to 2.4 million on a Before Housing Costs (BHC) basis and 700,000 from 4.1 million to 3.4 million on an After Housing Costs (AHC) basis.

Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02, increasing above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 4,100 families in Islington South and Finsbury.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the least well off pensioners. The Government will be spending over £10 billion extra in 2006–07 on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997. Almost half of this spending going to the least well off third of pensioners.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, rewards people aged 65 and over who have made modest provision for their retirement. As of August 2005, around 4,500 pensioners in Islington South and Finsbury are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £62.27 per week.

We know that older people, who are often on fixed incomes, value timely help with fuel costs. This winter (2005–06) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 if the household includes someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. In 2004–05, around 11,200 people in Islington South and Finsbury received a winter fuel payment. We expect the numbers to be similar for winter 2005–06.

Additionally, for 2005–06, eligible households with someone aged 65 or over, not receiving the guarantee credit element of pension credit received a one-off payment of £200 to help with their council tax bills. Pensioner households with someone aged 70 and over in receipt of the guarantee credit received a one-off payment of £50 to help with living expenses.

Since 1997 pensioners have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. As at August 2005, around 9,800 pensioners in Islington South and Finsbury have benefited from this increase.

Notes:

1. Pension credit and state pension data are as at August 2005.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
3. Pension credit replaced MIG on 6 October 2003.
4. Average amounts are shown to the nearest penny.

Source:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS).

Disabled Person Disregard

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of raising the disabled person disregard for housing benefit and council tax benefit to £82. [61053]

Mr. Plaskitt: The estimated cost of raising the higher rate of earnings disregard for housing benefit and council tax benefit to £82 is £110 million per annum.

Notes:

1. The costs are rounded to the nearest £10 million and are for Great Britain.
2. The impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06, using data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.
3. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of extending the disabled person disregard to all recipients of incapacity benefits. [61054]

Mrs. McGuire: The information necessary to make such an estimate is not available.

Household Income

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of household income came from *(a)* tax credits, *(b)* means-tested benefits, *(c)* other benefits, *(d)* earned income excluding tax credits and *(e)* other sources in each year since 1997, broken down by income quintile or decile. [60608]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Income Growth

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the real increase in the income of each income decile was in each year since 1978–79; and if he will make a statement. [41295]

Margaret Hodge: The information is in the tables.

Information is shown for incomes measured before housing costs were deducted (BHC) and for incomes after housing costs were deducted (AHC).

Median incomes of deciles of the 1979 to 1995–97 Before Housing Costs (BHC) income distributions are in the following table: 1.1

£

					Decile					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1979	110	137	160	183	205	230	258	294	341	447
1981	108	133	156	177	201	226	255	291	346	455
1987	115	143	168	199	231	262	299	349	423	605
1988–89	112	145	174	209	245	282	324	377	459	644
1990–91	108	145	177	214	251	293	338	401	488	706
1991–92	109	146	177	213	252	294	338	400	490	703
1992–93	110	148	180	213	251	293	340	401	490	698
1993–95	116	156	187	220	256	298	345	402	494	709

Note:
£pw equivalised to 2003–04 prices.
Source:
Family Expenditure Survey (UK)

Median incomes of deciles of the 1994–95 to 2003–04 income distributions Before Housing Costs (BHC) are in the following table: 1.2

£

					Decile					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1994–95	117	156	186	217	254	295	342	402	489	702
1995–96	118	158	188	219	254	294	342	400	494	704
1996–97	121	161	193	227	264	307	354	415	507	723
1997–98	119	163	196	230	270	311	360	421	515	735
1998–99	122	166	200	234	273	317	369	434	530	778
1999–2000	124	172	205	240	282	325	377	444	538	783
2000–01	126	179	215	251	291	335	388	457	558	812
2001–02	135	188	226	265	306	351	402	471	583	851
2002–03	134	192	231	269	311	359	411	477	586	860
2003–04	134	193	233	271	313	359	412	483	584	856

Note:
£pw equivalised to 2003–04 prices.
Source:
The Family Resources Survey (FRS)

Median incomes of deciles of the 1979 to 1995–97 income distributions After Housing Costs (AHC) are in the following table: 1.3

£

					Decile					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1979	88	113	131	151	171	192	217	246	286	377
1981	85	107	126	147	168	190	215	248	293	390
1987	85	112	134	161	190	219	254	297	357	522
1988–89	83	114	140	172	205	238	274	321	392	552
1990–91	76	112	140	175	209	246	287	340	414	609
1991–92	73	112	139	175	210	247	287	343	417	611
1992–93	72	113	139	173	211	248	289	343	420	607
1993–95	77	117	145	178	214	251	294	344	425	622

Note:
£pw equivalised to 2003–04 prices.
Source:
Family Expenditure Survey (UK)

Median incomes of deciles of the 1994–95 to 2003–04 income distributions After Housing Costs (AHC) are in the following table: 1.4

£

					Decile					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1994–95	68	114	140	174	208	247	290	344	419	607
1995–96	75	116	141	173	209	246	288	341	422	613

£

	Decile									
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1996–97	78	117	144	181	220	259	303	358	439	634
1997–98	76	119	150	187	224	264	308	364	447	643
1998–99	82	122	153	190	228	269	318	374	462	686
1999–2000	82	128	160	197	237	279	326	386	474	701
2000–01	82	135	170	208	249	290	339	401	494	722
2001–02	91	145	181	224	263	305	354	415	516	768
2002–03	90	150	188	229	272	316	366	428	527	778
2003–04	88	152	193	233	274	320	370	434	533	789

Note:

£pw equivalised to 2003–04 prices.

Source:

The Family Resources Survey (FRS)

Notes to all tables:

1. Real income growth is shown by the changes in decile income medians which have been adjusted for inflation.
2. The Before Housing Costs and After Housing Costs income deciles are consistent with methodology used in DWP's National Statistics[1] series, Households Below Average Income.
3. Comparisons for the bottom decile should be treated with more caution. Decile medians for the bottom 10 per cent. are more volatile as they are affected to a greater extent by the composition of that decile, particularly by changes in the proportion of people who report very low incomes.
4. Caution should be exercised when interpreting changes over shorter time periods.
5. The Family Expenditure Survey (FES) data covers selected years from 1979 until 1995–97 where information are available. The Family Resources Survey (FRS) data is for all financial years 1994–95 until 2003–04.
6. Comparisons of estimates between the two sources should be treated carefully:

FES figures are for the United Kingdom, FRS figures are for Great Britain.

The reference period for FRS figures is single financial years. FES figures are single calendar years from 1979–87, two combined calendar years from 1988–89 to 1992–93 and two financial years combined from 1993–95 to 1995–97.

The FRS was established by the then Department of Social Security in order to meet the Department's analytical requirements.

A review, available on the internet, into the differences in income values between the two surveys concluded that the differences in monetary value estimates across surveys were too large to justify publishing direct comparisons. Furthermore, large fluctuations in the difference between surveys for overlapping years mean that, in many cases, an adjusted, or a spliced time series may be no more accurate than the unadjusted series.

Jobcentre Plus

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what internet sites operated by Jobcentre Plus are available to jobseekers; and how their existence is publicised. [60788]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what Internet sites operated by Jobcentre Plus are available to jobseekers and how their existence is publicised. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The Jobcentre Plus website (www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk) is our Internet service for jobseekers. The site allows users to search our extensive database of some 400,000 vacancies. In addition, the site provides job hunting advice and information on programmes such as New Deal to help people back into work. The site currently receives around 1.5 million visitors each week.

The website is publicised to customers in a variety of ways. Every piece of correspondence to customers on pre-printed letter headed paper shows the Jobcentre Plus website address and many of our computer generated letters—which are usually about specific benefit issues—also give the web address. All of our centrally produced customer information leaflets feature the website address predominantly across the centre of the back cover, and often they also show the website address in the main text. These leaflets are available in all Jobcentre Plus offices and in a variety of our partners' premises, such as Citizens' Advice Bureaux and GPs' surgeries.

As far as specific promotional campaigns are concerned, in January 2004 Jobcentre Plus ran a series of national television advertisements aimed at people looking for work. These were primarily to promote our telephone job finding service, Jobseeker Direct, but also publicised our website as an alternative method for accessing our job search facilities. During 2004 we also distributed a leaflet to over 6.7 million residential households to promote Jobcentre Plus services, including our website.

I hope this is helpful.

New Deal

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those entering new deal in 2003 were in work at the end of December 2005. [54979]

Margaret Hodge: Of those who entered the new deal in 2003, 39 per cent. were recorded as being in employment on the 31 August 2005, the latest date for which information is available. This percentage is a snapshot of those who joined the programme in 2003 who were in employment on that particular day. A total of 70 per cent. of those entering new deal in 2003 are recorded as gaining employment at some point between joining the programme and the end of August 2005.

Many of those who did not enter employment will have undertaken education and training, or participated in other new deal options like the Environmental Task Force or voluntary sector options, all of which will have improved their job readiness and employability. Only 6 per cent. of those who started the new deal in 2003 were still on the programme at the end of August 2005.

It is inevitable in a dynamic labour market that some people will move into and out of employment after leaving new deal. However, new deal helps people stay in work longer than those in the general labour market and people on the programme have still added to their skills and experience, making it easier for them to find a job in the future.

Note:

Data excludes participants on New Deal for Partners, for which relevant information is not available.

Source: New Deal database and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the latest Government estimate is of the *(a)* gross and *(b)* net cost per youth job created by the new deal for young people. [54985]

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost has been to his Department of each new deal programme in each year since the schemes began. [56970]

Margaret Hodge: The average cost of helping a person into work through all the new deals is £2,102, and the cost of helping a person into work through new deal for young people is £2,770.

The new deal has been successful in helping more than 1.5 million people into work and independent research has shown that the economy as a whole is richer by £500 million a year as a result of new deal for young people alone. Research has also demonstrated that long-term youth unemployment would have been twice as high without new deal for young people.

The information on new deal costs is in the table.

New deal programme costs since 1997

£ million

	New deal for young people	*New deal 25 plus*	*New deal 50 plus*	*New deal for disabled people*	*New deal for lone parents*	*New deal for partners*	*Total*
1997–98	12	0	0	0	0	0	12
1998–99	162	17	0	0	1	0	180
1999–2000	282	71	1	15	12	0	381
2000–01	293	42	45	7	14	1	402
2001–02	219	140	82	4	9	2	456
2002–03	221	166	82	16	18	0	502
2003–04	265	189	42	28	20	0	544
2004–05	264	169	3	65	24	1	526
Total	1,718	794	254	135	98	4	3,003

Notes:

1. Latest confirmed spend figures are to March 2005.
2. Cost per person into work figures are calculated on confirmed spend data to March 2005 and the number of individuals into work to March 2005.
3. Number of people into work through all new deals to March 2005:1,429,000; number of people into work through new deal for young people to March 2005: 620,000.
4. Spend data include all new deal programme costs and allowances paid to participants apart from the 50 plus element of the working tax credit. As this is not included in the figures, new deal 50 plus costs reduce after 2002–03.
5. Spend data exclude administrative costs as it is no longer possible to identify the costs of administering each new deal separately from the costs of other labour market activities.
6. Spend on new deal for partners in 2002–03 and 2003–04 was less than £0.5 million and is thus not recorded as figures are rounded to the nearest £ million.
7. Spend data are rounded to the nearest £ million; the average cost per person into work is rounded to the nearest pound.
8. Start dates for each new deal programme are: new deal for young people: January 1998; new deal 25 plus: July 1998; new deal for lone parents: October 1998; new deal 50 plus: April 2000; new deal for disabled people: July 2001; new deal for partners: April 1999.
9. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Sources:

DWP Financial Strategy Division
DWP Financial Control Division
DWP Information Directorate

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those who joined the new deal in 2005 was not doing so for the first time. [54988]

Margaret Hodge: Between January and November 2005, 62 per cent. of participants had not been on the new deal programme before and 38 per cent. had. In a dynamic labour market it is inevitable that some individuals who find work through the new deal will become unemployed again at some point in the future and at some stage qualify for the new deal again. It is also the case that some individuals have complex barriers to work and will find it difficult to maintain employment over a long period. However, those people who have participated in the new deal will have added to their skills and experience, making it easier for them to find a job in the future.

Note:

Latest available data.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many benefit claimants have been subject to sanctions for not attending a work-focused interview under the new deal for lone parents *(a)* once, *(b)* twice and *(c)* three times or more in each year since the introduction of the scheme; what the average loss of benefits was in each year; and how many claimants sanctioned subsequently had their benefit reinstated. [57289]

Margaret Hodge: New deal for lone parents is a voluntary programme that aims to help and encourage lone parents to improve their job readiness and employment opportunities, and to gain independence through working. Failure to attend a mandatory work focused interview without good cause can result in a reduction of benefit. However, if the person subsequently participates in the interview then the sanction is lifted.

The available information is in the tables.

Lone parent sanctions for not attending a work focused interview

	Work focused interviews booked	*Sanction applied once*	*Proportion applied once (percentage)*	*Sanction applied twice*	*Proportion applied twice (percentage)*	*Sanction applied three times or more*	*Proportion applied three times or more*	*Average weekly loss of benefit*
April 2001 to March 2002	155,500	2,500	1.6	100	0.06	0	0.003	10.49
April 2002 to March 2003	337,300	5,900	1.8	300	0.10	100	0.018	10.63
April 2003 to March 2004	601,700	13,400	2.2	1,200	0.21	100	0.022	10.58
April 2004 to March 2005	763,900	28,500	3.7	2,200	0.28	100	0.015	10.91
April 2005 to December 2005	631,300	22,800	3.6	200	0.03	0	0.001	11.18
Total	2,489,600	73,100	2.9	4,000	0.16	300	0.012	—

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred; therefore the totals may not be a sum of the elements. Percentages are actual percentages calculated on the unrounded figures.

2. Information on the average loss each year of benefit due to a lone parent work focused interview sanction, and how many claimants had their benefit re-instated is not collected.

Source:

National Lone Parent Evaluation database (0512)

Parliamentary Questions

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many parliamentary questions tabled in the last 12 months for answer by him on a named day *(a)* were transferred and *(b)* received a substantive answer (i) on the day named and (ii) after the day named. [49884]

Mrs. McGuire: For the year 7 February 2005 to 6 February 2006 inclusive, the number of parliamentary questions tabled in the last 12 months for answer by him on a named day *(a)* which were transferred and *(b)* which received a substantive answer (i) on the day named and (ii) after the day named were:

	Number
(a) Transferred	27
(b)(i) Answered by named day	311
(b)(ii) Answered after named day	266

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pilot schemes for the migration of Post Office card account holders to banking facilities will be operating in the eastern region over the next 12 months. [55028]

Mr. Plaskitt: We have no plans to operate any pilots in the eastern region.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of each payable benefit was transacted through *(a)* a Post Office card account and *(b)* another account at a post office in (i) rural post offices, (ii) urban post offices, (iii) Communities First areas in Wales and (iv) Communities First areas in the South Wales valleys in the latest period for which figures are available. [55452]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The information is not available in the format requested.

Information showing the proportion of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account and a bank/building society account for the local authorities in Wales has been placed in the Library.

Private Pensions

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of people living in London who have a private pension; and if he will make a statement. [60553]

Mr. Timms: In 2004–05 the number of people contributing to a private pension in London is estimated to be 1.7 million. This represents 38 per cent. of the working age population in London, compared with 43 per cent. of the UK working age population, contributing to a private pension.

In addition, 0.7 million people in London are estimated to be in receipt of a private pension. This represents 13 per cent. of the adult population in London.

Notes:

1. Figures are estimates relating to those contributing to a private pension and are taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). 2004–05 is the latest year for which data are available. The coverage of the survey is the UK.

2. Members who are 'contributing' to a private pension scheme include those who are building up rights within a salary related scheme, those who are currently contributing to a scheme or whose employer makes a contribution on their behalf. Private pension refers to either an occupational, personal or stakeholder pension scheme.

3. Those individuals who contribute to both occupational and personal pension schemes are only counted once in the final figure.

4. Working age includes those aged 20 to state pension age.

5. Estimates for those who are in receipt of a private pension are taken from the Individual Income Series, calculated as an average across 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04. Estimates include payments received from occupational and personal pension schemes, widow's employee pensions, trade union and friendly society pensions, annuity pensions, trusts and covenants. 2003–04 is the latest year for which data are available.

Source:

Family Resources Survey 2004–05.

Replacement Pension Costs

Ms Gisela Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the gross annual cost of restoring pensions in full to all those covered by the Parliamentary Ombudsman's report, 'Trusting in the Pensions Promise'; [61797]

(2) what his Department's estimate is of the annual net cost, after deducting payment of tax and reduced payments of means-tested benefits, for the next 40 years of replacing the lost pensions of surviving members of pension schemes which started winding-up between April 1997 and April 2005; [61794]

(3) what estimate he has made of the annual cost for the next 40 years of paying financial assistance scheme benefits to all members of final salary pension schemes which started winding-up without sufficient funds to cover all its pension liabilities between April 1997 and April 2005; [61796]

(4) what the evidential basis was for the figure of £15 billion as the cost to the public purse in the Government's response to the recommendation of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's report, 'Trusting in the Pensions Promise'. [61795]

Mr. Timms: We estimate that the gross average annual cost of restoring pensions in full to all those covered by the Parliamentary Ombudsman's report would be £250 million in cash terms over some 60 years. Annual costs would vary over time peaking at £400 million around the year 2030.

I will provide estimates shortly of the net annual costs, taking account of any estimated reduction as a consequence of taxation and reduced payments of means-tested benefits.

We estimate that extending the financial assistance scheme to cover all members of final salary pension schemes which started winding-up without sufficient funds to cover all its pension liabilities between April 1997 and April 2005, if the FAS benefit levels were retained, would cost on average £125 million per annum in cash terms over the first 40 years. It is likely that further costs would occur after that period.

The costs of the Ombudsman's proposals have been estimated using data collected for the financial assistance scheme (FAS). The data was obtained from schemes potentially eligible for FAS, the pensions regulator and the pensions industry. The data has been fed into an actuarial model to generate time profiles of costs. Mortality estimates were taken from the continuous mortality investigation.

Single Room Rent Restriction

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Single Room Rent restriction on housing benefit was in each locality in each of the Local Housing Allowance Pathfinder areas in each year between 1996–97 and 2004–05. [57957]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. The precise rate of Single Room Rent applicable in an individual case would be dependent on the location of the property within a locality; as determined by a Rent Officer. The figures in the table are a guideline only.

The Single Room Rent was replaced by the Shared Room Rate from the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance in November 2003. For information on the Shared Room Rate, I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave him on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 236W

Weekly single room rents in Pathfinder local authorities, each October 1996 to 2003

Local authority and Locality	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	£ *2003*
Blackpool Council								
Fylde	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	40	45	45	46
Brighton and Hove Council								
Brighton and Hove	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	55	58
Conwy County Borough Council								
Llandudno	[1]—	36	36	36	38	40	40	40
Colwyn Bay	[1]—	35	35	35	36	38	38	38
Northern Rural	[1]—	34	34	34	35	35	35	35
Menai	[1]—	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Coventry City Council								
Coventry	35	35	35	36	40	43	45	45
Edinburgh City Council								
Edinburgh Central	45	45	47	47	49	50	55	56
Edinburgh East	42	42	42	43	44	45	50	51
Edinburgh South West	45	43	46	46	46	47	51	52
Edinburgh North West	43	43	46	46	46	46	50	51
Leeds City Council								
Leeds	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	49	48

Weekly single room rents in Pathfinder local authorities, each October 1996 to 2003

Local authority and Locality	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	£ *2003*
London Borough of Lewisham								
LSE Central	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	78
LSE Inner	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	93
Northeast Lincolnshire Council								
N E Lincs	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	38	38	39	38
Teignbridge District Council								
Teignbridge	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	48	52
Exeter	37	43	43	45	43	44	48	55
Tiverton and Crediton	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	43	48
Tiverton	37	43	43	43	42	42	[1]—	[1]—
Crediton	37	43	43	43	39	42	[1]—	[1]—
Torbay	38	43	43	45	44	45	48	53
South Devon	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	48	50
Plymouth Environs	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	45	49

[1] Data not available or cannot be provided because of changes to localities.

Notes:

England

1. The data provided from October 1996 to October 1998, inclusive, has been compiled from old records inherited by The Rent Service on its establishment on 1 October 1999; The Rent Service cannot verify the veracity of the data.
2. Following the establishment of The Rent Service, all localities have been fundamentally reviewed and as a result, some localities were changed to better match the operation of the private rented sector market.

Wales

3. The data provided from October 1996 to October 2003, inclusive, has been compiled from old records inherited by Rent Officer Branch—Welsh Assembly Government on its assimilation into the National Assembly for Wales in June 2003.
4. Since June 2003 all localities have been fundamentally reviewed and as a result, some were changed to better match the operation of the private rented sector market.

Source:

Rent Registration Service, Scotland; Rent Officer Service, Wales; The Rent Service, England.

HEALTH

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with representatives of the medical profession about interpretation by them of section 1 of the Abortion Act 1967 (as amended); and if she will make a statement. [60851]

Caroline Flint: No such discussions have recently taken place. We have not been approached by leaders of the medical profession about any issues arising from section 1 of the Act.

Advertising Expenditure

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Department spent on advertising in each of the last five years. [10230]

Mr. Byrne *[pursuant to the reply, 13 July 2005, Official Report, c.1126W]:* I regret that the previous reply was incorrect. It should read as follows:

The table shows the expenditure on major information campaigns and advertising commissioned by the Department's communications directorate for the past five years 2000–01 to 2004–05. The figures include the costs of campaign-related publishing, television, radio, poster, newspaper and magazine advertising.

Financial years	*Advertising expenditure (£ million)*
2000–01	20.80
2001–02	20.41
2002–03	23.13
2003–04	38.98
2004–05	37.80

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on advertising by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which her Department is responsible and *(c)* each independent statutory body, organisation and body financially sponsored by her Department in each year since May 1997. [39070]

Mr. Byrne *[pursuant to the reply, 23 January 2006, Official Report, c. 1848W]:* I regret that the previous reply was incorrect. It should read as follows:

The table shows the expenditure on major information campaigns and advertising commissioned by the Department's communications directorate in each year since 1997.

Financial year	*Advertising expenditure (£ million)*
1997–98	2.04
1998–99	8.53
1999–2000	15.17
2000–01	20.80
2001–02	20.41

Financial year	*Advertising expenditure (£ million)*
2002–03	23.13
2003–04	38.98
2004–05	37.80
2005–06 estimate	23.00

We have no central record of advertising spend by non-departmental public bodies, executive agencies or independent statutory bodies or organisations financially sponsored by the Department and could not obtain these without incurring disproportionate costs.

Agenda for Change

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trusts in England have implemented the pay aspects agenda for change; how many plan to do so; and when such trusts will backdate payments to. [58927]

Mr. Byrne: Just over 97 per cent. of national health service staff in England have been assimilated to agenda for change, excluding foundation trusts. It is anticipated that this figure will rise to 99 per cent. by the end of March. All NHS trusts in England have been working towards full assimilation by the end of March and it is outlined in the final agreement that back pay will be to October 2004, or the start date of employment for staff who were appointed after October 2004.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the mechanism for paying ambulance trust personnel will change under Agenda for Change. [57522]

Mr. Byrne: Under agenda for change, ambulance staff will be paid like all other national health service staff with basic pay based on job evaluation using the NHS job evaluation scheme, unsocial hours payments for work outside of normal hours and high cost area payments for those working in the London area. There is a harmonised system for hours, overtime payments and annual leave and the full agenda for change NHS terms and conditions of service will apply. Copies of relevant documents are available in the Library.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulance personnel she expects to receive *(a)* a lower basic rate of pay and *(b)* a lower gross rate of pay under Agenda for Change, broken down by (i) pay grade, (ii) job and (iii) trust. [57523]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally. Under the agenda for change pay system the majority of frontline ambulance staff are moving from basic pay inclusive of an allowance for shift working, to arrangements in which basic pay and shift payments are separate. Taking these elements into account, it is estimated that almost all front-line ambulance staff will receive substantially higher earnings under agenda for change, in addition to longer holiday and shorter hours.

Alcohol (Labelling)

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations the Government have made *(a)* at the Council of Ministers, *(b)* to the European Commission and *(c)* to the European Parliament on the adoption of clear unit labelling of alcohol drinks; and if she will make a statement. [36917]

Caroline Flint: As part of discussions on the planned European Commission communication on an alcohol strategy for the European Union, departmental officials have sought clarification from the European Commission of the legal and practical feasibility of compulsory labelling of alcoholic beverage containers, as set out in the Government's alcohol harm reduction strategy for England, in the event that voluntary arrangements, currently under discussion with United Kingdom industry, should prove ineffective. No recent discussions have taken place on this subject in the Council of Ministers or the European Parliament.

Asperger's Syndrome

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that children diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome receive appropriate support and intervention from child and adolescent mental health services. [16889]

Mr. Byrne: The diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome in itself does not necessarily mean that a mental health service is required unless there is an associated mental health problem.

Standard 8 of the national service framework for children, young people and maternity deals with disabled children and young people. It recognised that children and young people with an autistic disorder, such as Asperger's, have particular needs and that they have often found it difficult to access child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) if they were needed. The framework states

> "primary care trusts, local authorities and CAMHS ensure that disabled children have equal access to CAMHS".

In addition, an exemplar has been published for children with an autistic spectrum disorder. It seeks to illustrate a care pathway for children with this disability and includes an assessment for mental health problems.

Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Ambulance Trust

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial situation of the merged Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Ambulance Trust; and what her assessment is of the impact of the Trust's financial situation on ambulance services in Gloucestershire. [61632]

Caroline Flint: Following ministerial approval, a new ambulance trust, Great Western Ambulance Service will be established from 1 April 2006.

The new trust will be established from a merger of the three existing trusts—Avon Ambulance National Health Service Trust, Gloucestershire Ambulance National

Health Service Trust and Wiltshire Ambulance National Health Service Trust.

The table shows the financial position of the three trusts.

Financial position 2004–05 and 2005–06

	2004–05 final accounts surplus/(deficit)	£000 2005–06 month 6 forecast outturn surplus/(deficit)
Avon Ambulance Service NHS Trust	5	0
Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust	107	0
Wiltshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	9	0

Source:
2005–06 monthly financial monitoring returns and 2004–05 audited summarisation schedule.

Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to extend the age range of bowel cancer screening following the implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. [61048]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The risk of bowel cancer increases with age, with over 80 per cent. of bowel cancers arising in people who are 60 or over. Men and women aged over 70 will be able to self-refer for screening every two years.

When we have rolled out the programme to the whole country, we will make an assessment on whether to expand it to other age groups.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* planned into possible enhanced risks of cancer through genetic variations interacting with environmental contaminants; and if she will make a statement. [62166]

Caroline Flint: The committee on carcinogenicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment carried out a review of the role of genotype in chemical induced cancers in 2002. It concluded that so far the available data had failed to show any consistent or strong association between the genotype of an individual and chemical induced cancer. However, the committee could not discount the possibility that important interactions might be discovered in the future. Both technical and lay statements are available on the Department's website at www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/coc/geneenv.htm.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the possible link between cancer and organochlorines in infants and young adults; and if she will make a statement. [62167]

Caroline Flint: The Department has not carried out a general review of the possible link between cancer and organochlorines in infants and young adults. The committee on carcinogenicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment reviewed the carcinogenicity of dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls in 2001. It concluded that 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzodioxin should be regarded as a probable human carcinogen but commented that any increased risk of cancer at background levels of exposure is likely to be extremely small and not detectable by current epidemiological methods. The committee also recently reviewed the overall evidence for chemical causes of childhood cancer, particularly for those cancers that are increasing in incidence. It concluded that there is little evidence for chemical causation of these cancers. The committee's reviews is available on its website at www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/coc/index.htm or in its annual reports.

Chlamydia

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of primary care trusts is participating in the chlamydia screening programme. [61147]

Caroline Flint: We have rolled out the programme successfully to 25 per cent. of primary care trusts (PCTs). We expect the remaining PCTs to start to come on board as of April 2006. The Health Protection Agency is now leading the roll out of the programme.

The White Paper, "Choosing Health: Making Healthier choices easier", a copy of which is available at the Library, announced an accelerated timetable to achieve national roll out of the national chlamydia screening programme by 2007. We are well on track to meet this target.

Choose and Book System

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons psychiatric patients are excluded from patient choice under the choose and book system. [57791]

Mr. Byrne: Mental health services are not currently included in patient choice at referral under the choose and book service. The national choice consultation in autumn 2003 highlighted the choices which mental health service users feel would most enhance their user experience, these focused on choice of treatment rather than choice of service provider. These findings informed the detailed work carried out to formulate the Government's choice at referral policy and led to the decision to exclude mental health services from choice at referral In the light of the national choice consultation's findings, the Department commissioned the choice in mental health programme, which is being run by the National Institute of Mental Health in England. This programme aims to extend the scope, range and equity of treatment choices available across service user pathways.

Chronic Hepatitis B

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance she has issued on the treatment of chronic hepatitis B; [60233]

(2) what assessment she has made of the economic costs of chronic hepatitis B. [60234]

Caroline Flint: In February 2006, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidance on adefovir dipivoxil and peginterferon alpha-2a for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B.

We have not made an assessment of the economic costs of chronic hepatitis B. NICE has estimated the national cost of implementing the above-mentioned guidance.

This NICE guidance and supplementary information is available on NICE's website at www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o = 293071.

Clinical Negligence

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the legally aided clinical negligence cases that were closed in the last 12 months with payment of compensation were settled for reasons of the health service defendant seeking to avoid or limit irrecoverable legal costs. [59977]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

Clinical Trials

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the operation of the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004; [60846]

(2) if she will make a statement on the operation of the EU directive on clinical trials. [60931]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 came into force in the United Kingdom on 1 May 2004. They regulate the conduct of clinical trials in the UK and implement the provisions of the EU directive on clinical trials (directive 2001/20/EC). Clinical trials are a fundamental part of the development process for new drugs or for establishing new uses for existing drugs. The overall aim of the clinical trials regulatory system is to ensure that the rights, safety and well-being of those participating in clinical trials are protected. Those conducting clinical trials are responsible for designing, conducting, recording and reporting clinical trials according to internationally recognised principles of good clinical practice. The information collected from the clinical trials on the safety and efficacy of the drug supports the application for a marketing authorisation for the drug. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is responsible for authorising all clinical trials that take place in the UK.

Communications Research

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's total expenditure on communications research has been in each month since July 2004; how much of this cost was accounted for by producing *(a)* reports on the public perceptions of the NHS, *(b)* reports from plain English workshops, *(c)* stakeholder surveys, *(d)* national media evaluations, *(e)* regional media evaluations and *(f)* other communications research; and what assessment she has made of the research. [58551]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's communications directorate's total market research spend since July 2004 has been:

Research project	*Total spend since July 2004 (£)*	*Monthly spend (c) (£)*
Public perceptions survey of the NHS	200,000	10,000
Plain English workshops	82,500	4,125
Stakeholder surveys	120,000	6,000
National media evaluation	100,000	5.000
Regional media evaluation	60,000	3,000
Other communications research: Campaigns[1]	3.2 million	160,000

Note:

Campaign expenditure is not calculated on a monthly basis but rather on a project basis.

This research provides a useful check on public sentiment and patient experience and complements the much larger Healthcare Commission patient surveys. The communications directorate uses its analysis to:

> Ensure that the communications strategy is built from a solid evidence base;
>
> Inform and evaluate communications activity to ensure that resources are prioritised effectively
>
> Ensure that important health information is easily understood by the public and
>
> Highlight any inaccuracies in media reporting on health that could be harmful to public health.

Analysis is shared with:

> Local national health service communications teams, who use it to benchmark the effectiveness of their own activities and
>
> NHS senior managers and stakeholders to inform policy developments and business planning.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's definition is of a community hospital in a rural area. [59756]

Mr. Byrne: Community hospitals encompass a wide range of institutions, which provide a diverse number of health and social care services, which means they are difficult to define. However, the White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new Direction for Community Services" defines a community hospital as:

> A service which offers integrated health and social care and is supported by community- based professionals.
>
> Local hospitals serving relatively small populations (less than 100,000), providing a range of clinical services but not equipped to handle emergency admissions on a 24/7 basis.

No distinction is made over whether a community hospital is situated within a rural or urban location.

Continuing Care (Restitution Process)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she took to ascertain that all strategic health authorities undertook advertising and publicity in order to raise awareness of the restitution process, as stated on page 17 of the Government's response to the Health Select Committee's Report on Continuing Care. [60516]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities undertook a programme of publicity which they considered reasonable to inform the public on a local basis. The decision as to the precise nature of the publicity policy rested with the individual strategic health authority, so that it might be tailored to existing regional awareness.

Dentistry

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio of applicants to places on dentistry degree courses was in 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [45414]

Bill Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

We are funding the biggest expansion of dental education since the inception of the NHS. As I informed the House on 26 January 2006, we are increasing training places for dentists by over 25 per cent. from 2004–05 to provide around 840 places in England from 2005–06. Figures from UCAS, showing the ratio between applicants and acceptances for those students starting dentistry courses in the UK in autumn 2004, are shown in the table.

Applicants and acceptances[1] via UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in pre-clinical dentistry
Autumn 2004 entry

	Applicants and acceptances
Applicants	2,118
Acceptances	989
Ratio of applicants to acceptances	2.1

[1] Covers all applicants and acceptances from UK and overseas students. The applicant figures are for students whose preferred subject was dentistry (i.e. dentistry was the subject for which they made the most applications).

Source:
Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS)

Early figures for 2006 entry show that a total of 2,911 students had applied for dentistry courses by the advisory deadline of mid-October, compared to 2,938 at the same point in the previous year. Not all of these students will have applied for dentistry as their preferred subject, so these numbers are not directly comparable with those in the table.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* adults and *(b)* children on average were registered with an NHS dentist in West Chelmsford constituency in (i) 2000 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available. [61049]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services and personal dental services: number of adults and children registered with a national health service dentist in West Chelmsford constituency as at 30 September in each specified year

	Adults	*Children*	*Total*
2000	50,813	17,460	68,273
2005	51,044	16,904	67,948

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists in West Chelmsford constituency on average were registered to carry out NHS work in *(a)* 2000 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available. [61050]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As of 30 September 2005, there were 59 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within West Chelmsford parliamentary constituency. The corresponding figure for 30 September 2000 was 44.

A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with their primary care trust. Information concerning the amount of time dedicated to NHS work by individual GDS or PDS dentists is not centrally available.

Notes:

Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.

Dentists consist of principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded.

The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. Constituency areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Data on the number of dentists working only in private practice is not held centrally.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on NHS general dental services in the Mid Essex Hospital Trust area in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms in (i) 2000 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available. [61156]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated average annual cost to the NHS is expected to be of a dentist operating under the new contract; whether an equivalent sum will be available to primary care trusts in respect of each NHS dentist who declines to register for NHS care under the new contract; and whether such funds will be restricted to the provision of alternative dental services. [61612]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The national health service payments, including revenue from patient charges, made to dentists providing general dental services (GDS) from 1 April 2006 will be based largely on the dentist's gross NHS earnings during the reference period October 2004 to September 2005, uplifted to 2006–07 prices. The estimated average gross NHS earnings in 2005–06 for GDS dentists with a reasonable NHS commitment are £159,600.

Where a dentist chooses not to take up a new GDS contract, the primary care trust (PCT) will use the funding associated with that contract to re-commission dental services from other providers. The funding released in this way will not necessarily be equivalent to the average gross earnings for NHS dentists, but rather will reflect the previous gross earnings of the dentist in question.

PCTs have been given dedicated, devolved budgets for commissioning dental services, so that, where a dentist ceases to provide NHS services in their area (or provides a reduced level of service), the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in other dental services.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average waiting time is for people to receive a digital hearing aid from the national health service in *(a)* England and *(b)* Beverley and Holderness; and if she will make a statement; [59581]

(2) what plans she has to reduce waiting times for receiving a digital hearing aid; and if she will make a statement; [59582]

(3) how many people are waiting to receive a digital hearing aid in *(a)* England and *(b)* Beverley and Holderness; and if she will make a statement; [59583]

(4) what assessment she has made of the availability of digital hearing aids in *(a)* England and *(b)* Beverley and Holderness; and if she will make a statement. [59584]

Mr. Byrne: Information on waiting lists and times for digital hearing aids are not centrally collected.

The Department will publish principles and definitions for the 18-week maximum wait in the spring. Since January 2006, the Department has been collecting waiting times for pure tone audiometry, although, as with many new data collections, it may take a number of months of collection before the data is of sufficient quality to be publishable.

Several initiatives have been introduced through the modernising hearing aid services programme to increase capacity to deliver audiology services in England. These are the national framework contract (public private partnership) to bring in additional independent sector capacity, the development of a new degree to help to address the shortage of audiologists and the introduction of Hearing Direct which provides follow-up care and advice for some hearing aid users.

From April 2005, the 164 National Hearing Service audiology departments have been able to routinely assess for and fit digital hearing aids. It is for primary care trusts to ensure their local population benefits from the modernised services.

Drug and Alcohol Misuse

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many civil servants at what grades are employed in her Department *(a)* to deal with treatment for people who are misusing drugs and *(b)* on the alcohol strategy. [58359]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the tables in whole-time equivalents (WTE) for the senior civil service and the Department's integrated pay scales.

Drug treatment (includes less than one WTE working on drug prevention)

	Wte
Senior civil service	0.6
IP4 Upper	0.9
IP4 Standard	1.0
IP3 Standard	1.0
IP2	1.00
Total	4.5

Alcohol strategy

	Wte
Senior Civil Service	0.4
IP4 Upper	0.5
IP4 Standard	1.0
IP3 Standard	1.0
IP2	0
Total	2.9

Notes:
IP—integrated pay band where IP1 is the minimum pay range.

Education/Training Budgets

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much she has budgeted for *(a)* non-medical education and training and *(b)* multi-professional education and training in each year since 1999. [60392]

Mr. Byrne: The amount budgeted for non-medical education and training and multi-professional education and training in each year since 1999 is shown in the table.

£ million

	Non-medical education and training	*Multi-professional education and training*
1999–2000	905	2,056
2000–01	1,052	2,385
2001–02	1,141	2,545
2002–03	1,336	3,076
2003–04	1,551	3,436
2004–05	1,743	3,813
2005–06	1,721	3,929

Endometriosis

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to improve awareness of endometriosis. [60479]

Mr. Byrne: The Department provided £39,000 to the National Endometriosis Society to produce two information leaflets: one for women and one for general practitioners (GPs) aimed at raising awareness of the symptoms of endometriosis. We are aware that the leaflets were well received and pick up rates were higher than average. Section 64 funding of £7,374 was also allocated for the organisation's GP surgery awareness project.

The Department continues to work closely with and has provided Section 64 funding to the National Endometriosis Society and Endometriosis SHE Trust (UK). Funding has helped with the cost of both organisations core activities as well as specific projects.

Environmental Health Inspections

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many food providers failed environmental health inspections in the last 12 months in each London borough; and if she will make a statement. [60552]

Jane Kennedy: I am advised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that the information requested is not available centrally. A summary of enforcement action taken for each London borough during the financial year 2004–05 is shown in the table.

Official control of foodstuffs statistics for London boroughs 2004–05—infringements

London borough	*Number of formal enforcement actions reported by London boroughs to the FSA for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005*[1]
Barking and Dagenham	197
Barnet	469
Bexley	593
Brent	727
Bromley	438
Camden	734
Croydon	727
City of London	16
Ealing	49
Enfield	1,039
Greenwich	380
Hackney	162
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,087
Haringey	506
Harrow	457
Havering	497
Hillingdon	736
Hounslow	261
Islington	875
Kensington and Chelsea	1,677
Kingston-upon-Thames	428
Lambeth	0
Lewisham	686
Merton	419
Newham	431
Redbridge	308
Richmond-upon-Thames	573
Southwark	1,239
Sutton	492
Tower Hamlets	1,151
Waltham Forest	458
Wandsworth	215
Westminster	1,975

[1] Source: Food Standards Agency—OCD Database.

Notes:

1. Formal enforcement action includes written warnings, improvement notices, voluntary closures, and food seizures, surrenders or detentions, formal cautions, prosecutions, prohibition orders and emergency prohibition orders.
2. The data exclude cases where, based on their professional judgment, the enforcement officers gave informal advice on minor issues.

Frimley Park Hospital

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what income was received by Frimley Park hospital in each quarter of the most recent three years for which figures are available; and what estimate has been made of the likely income in each quarter of the next two years. [61405]

Caroline Flint: Frimley Park hospital trust was authorised by Monitor (the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of national health service foundation trusts) as an NHS foundation trust on 1 April 2005. The total income of the trust in the preceding three years is shown in the following table.

Frimley Park hospital NHS trust—total income

	£000 *Amount*
2002–03	110,138
2003–04	121,546
2004–05	130,812

Source:

Audited summarisation schedules of the Frimley Park hospital NHS trust.

Information on financial projections is a matter for the chair of Frimley Park hospital NHS foundation trust. I have written to Jane Cooke informing her of your inquiry, and a copy of her reply letter will be placed in the Library.

General Medical Services Contract

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the rationale for the recent inclusion of new clinical indicators in the revised Quality and Outcomes Framework on the General Medical Services contract will be published. [58637]

Mr. Byrne: The review of the quality and outcomes framework as part of the general medical services negotiations was supported by an expert panel, engaged by NHS Employers, and lead by the University of Birmingham. The role of the expert panel was to synthesise the evidence submitted and to provide advice to the negotiators with regard to both the potential for health gain and the practicalities of implementing the indicators suggested. Submissions were made to the panel from a wide range of groups.

The expert panel reports which were submitted to the negotiating parties will be published in the spring of 2006 by NHS Employers.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the second phase of the review of the General Medical Services contract will take place. [58638]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers will be discussing changes to the general medical services contract for 2007–08 onwards with the British Medical Association in the near future.

Genetics

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the total planned investment on genetics of £50 million referred to on page 5 of her Department's White Paper "Our Inheritance: Our Future", published June 2003, Cm 5791-II has been achieved; and if she will break down spending by main expenditure area. [60393]

Jane Kennedy: The funding of £50 million announced in the genetics White Paper, "Our Inheritance, Our Future" built on an earlier commitment made in April 2001 by the then Secretary of State for Health to invest £30 million in national health service genetic services. By the end of financial year 2005–06, we will have invested £52.4 million equipping the NHS to make appropriate use of genetic knowledge and technology as it becomes available. The breakdown of this investment in genetics under the White Paper and earlier commitments is shown in the table.

Investment in genetics	*£ million*
Strengthening specialised genetic services via investment in upgrading NHS genetic laboratories and recruiting more consultants, genetic counsellors and laboratory staff.	40.9
Building genetics into mainstream services by piloting new ways of integrating genetics into other specialties (such as cancer) and primary care.	3.6
Spreading genetics knowledge across the NHS via a new NHS national genetics education and development centre, a genetics specialist library of the national electronic library for health, and other educational and information initiatives for health care professionals and the public.	2.1

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Investment in genetics	*£ million*
Generating new knowledge by funding research into pharmacogenetics, gene therapy and health services research in genetics.	5.8

The White Paper included a commitment to review progress after three years to see what more needs to be done.

Health Professionals (Treatment Options)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to ensure that health professionals understand the *(a)* symptoms, *(b)* effects and *(c)* treatment options. [60478]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has previously provided funding to ensure that women and general practitioners are more aware of the signs and symptoms of the condition and seek help at an early stage. We remain committed to working with the National Endometriosis Society and other relevant organisations to understand better the causes and to find ways to continue to raise awareness.

Endometriosis is a named condition in the core training of all gynaecologists, requiring knowledge of the condition and competence in diagnosis, investigation and management to complete the core logbook for training in obstetrics and gynaecology. The Department is aware that last year the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists issued a revised guideline on the investigation and management of endometriosis. The aim is to provide clinicians with up to date information about the diagnosis and treatment of the condition, based upon the best available evidence.

Hillingdon Primacy Care Trust

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses employed in the Hillingdon primary care trust area are on *(a)* permanent and *(b)* temporary contracts. [60288]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not held in the format requested. However, the table shows the number of qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff employed in the Hillingdon primary care trust who are full-time, part-time and bank staff.

Bank staff are a combination of substantive national health service employees who work additional hours and staff specifically employed on bank contracts who cover shifts on an ad-hoc and temporary basis.

NHS hospital and community health services: qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff employed in the Hillingdon primary care trust as at 30 September 2004

	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Bank staff*	*Headcount Total*
All staff	357	128	90	575
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	258	128	90	476
Practice nurses	99	0	0	99

Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

Independent Sector Treatment Centre

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy to provide financial assistance to hospitals which lose income as a result of the establishment of an Independent Sector Treatment Centre in their area. [57752]

Mr. Byrne: At the end of 2005–06, the wave one independent sector treatment centre (ISTC) programme will deliver approximately 60,000 elective procedures against a projected total of six million national health service procedures. This equates to less than one per cent. of elective procedures carried out in the NHS.

However, these centres have introduced new working methods, reduced NHS waiting lists and provided more patient choice. It would be inappropriate to provide financial assistance to hospitals which lose income because patients chose to use an ISTC for their treatment.

Local Improvement Finance Trusts

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what target is in place for development of local improvement finance trust schemes. [61689]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* NHS LIFT was announced in the NHS Plan which also identified LIFT, along side other existing primary care procurement routes, as a mechanism to support the delivery of the following:

Up to £1 billion investment in primary care facilities;

Up to 3,000 family doctors' premises substantially refurbished or replaced by 2004; and

500 one stop primary care centres delivered by 2004, which has further been extended by delivering the NHS Plan to 750 by 2008.

There are no further national targets on LIFT because, in line with "Shifting the Balance of Power", NHS LIFT is a mechanism to be used by primary care trusts locally to support the delivery of their service modernisation programme as detailed in their individual strategic service development plan.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the percentage split between the public and private sector is for each local improvement finance trust. [61704]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Stakeholder investment in each of the 42 established local improvement finance trusts (LIFT) is 60 per cent. private sector, 20 per cent. Partnerships for Health and

20 per cent. local health economy. The local health economy investment is usually made by primary care trusts, but it could also include the local authority.

Partnerships for Health is the national joint venture established by the Department and Partnerships UK to support delivery of the LIFT programme.

Malignant Diseases

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the possible risk of hormone-dependent malignancies from *(a)* synthetic pesticides and *(b)* organochlorines; and if she will make a statement. [62165]

Caroline Flint: Individual pesticides are approved for use following a full safety assessment and receipt of independent advice from the advisory Committee on pesticides. Organochlorine pesticides are no longer approved for use in the United Kingdom.

The Committee on carcinogenicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment carried out a review in 1999 of breast cancer risk and exposure to the organochlorine insecticides dieldrin, dichlora-diphenyl trichloroethane (DDT) and certain hexachlorocyclohexane isomers. This was updated in 2004. Statements on both reviews are available on the Department's website at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/coc/statements.htm.

In 2004, the Committee considered the possible chemical causation of prostate cancer. It concluded that there was some limited evidence to suggest an association between farmers/farm workers, exposure to pesticides and increased risk of prostate cancer. The possibility of such an association being causal could not be discounted and the published literature should continue to be monitored for further studies. The Committee commented on the need for improved measures of exposure to pesticides, and in particular herbicides. It was considered that the potential association between herbicide use by farmers and farm workers should be kept under review. The full statement is also available on the Department's website at www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/coc/prostate.htm.

The Committee is currently conducting a review of testicular cancer and conclusions will be published in due course.

Medicines Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the operation of the Medicines Act 1968. [60847]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines Act 1968 came into operation in 1971. Since then some provisions have been amended or disapplied by regulations implementing European legislation. The Act, and secondary legislation made under it, currently govern the manufacturing and wholesale distribution of medicines, licensing for medicines falling outside the European regulatory regime, the retail sale and supply of medicines, medicines advertising, control of pharmacies, preparation of the British Pharmacopoeia and enforcement of medicines legislation. The Act also establishes the system of medicines advisory bodies. Since 30 October 2005, the Act applies only to medicines for human use. The provisions of the Act are implemented and enforced by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which is an Executive agency of the Department. The legislation is kept under constant review.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether discussions have been held between the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and *(a)* the General Medical Council and *(b)* other professional associations for pharmaceutical physicians to remind and advise pharmaceutical physicians and their managers of their obligations, with particular reference to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; [59164]

Pharmaceutical Industry

(2) whether she has satisfied herself that the level of protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 offers sufficient protection to employees within the pharmaceutical sector; and whether she plans to review the working of the Act within the sector; [59165]

(3) which Government Departments are responsible for investigating complaints of misconduct in the pharmaceutical industry; and what plans there are for making public the results of investigations, particularly when complaints are upheld; [59166]

(4) how many pharmaceutical employees have contacted *(a)* the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and *(b)* a Government Department to report concerns about misconduct within the pharmaceutical sector since the implementation of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; what proportion of such contacts led to an investigation; and in how many the complaints were justified and upheld; [59167]

(5) if she will draw to the attention of pharmaceutical employers the implications and obligations arising from the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. [61127]

Jane Kennedy: The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides comprehensive protection for workers who responsibly blow the whistle on wrongdoing in the workplace and are victimised by their employer for doing so. The Act provides adequate protection to all workers, regardless of sector and places no obligations directly on employers. There are no imminent plans to review its working within any sector.

The Department does not collect or hold any information internally as regards to how many pharmaceutical employees have contacted them or other Government departments to report concerns about misconduct within the pharmaceutical sector.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) does not hold a central record of approaches made since the implementation of the Act as there is no legal requirement to do so. However, the MHRA has received disclosures, some justified as well as some bogus allegations. Some have led to administrative/criminal investigations. Others have led to no further action being taken. The MHRA has no obligation to remind or advise professional associations or other employers in the sector of their obligations under the Act and therefore has had no discussions with General Medical Council or any other professional associations about their obligations under the Act.

Mental Health

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what targets she has set for the mental health of *(a)* young people, *(b)* people of working age and *(c)* people older than working age; and if she will make a statement. [59144]

Mr. Byrne: Improving child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) is one of the priorities for this Government, as emphasised by the public service agreement standard of a comprehensive CAMHS in every area of England. This commitment to improve CAMHS has been backed by significant additional funding, over £300 million in the last three years.

The CAMHS module of the children's national service framework for England (September 2004) sets the framework for CAMHS for the next 10 years. It sets the standard that all children and young people, from birth to their eighteenth birthday, who have mental health problems and disorders, will have access to timely, integrated, high quality multidisciplinary mental health services to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support, for them, their parents or carers, and other family members.

Alongside the core and developmental standards set out in 'National Standards, Local Action: Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework 2005–06—2007–08', local national health service bodies are working towards the following for those of working age:

Substantially reduce mortality rates from suicide and undetermined injury by at least 20 per cent. by 2010.

Improve life outcomes of adults (and children) with mental health problems by ensuring that all patients who need them have access to crisis services by 2005.

Offer 24 hour crisis resolution to all eligible patients by 2005.

Expand the mental health workforce by 300 extra prison in-reach staff, 500 community development workers for black and minority ethnic communities; 200 staff and six outreach teams for personality disorder and training of 3000 support time and recovery workers by 2006.

Reduce the duration of untreated psychosis to a service median of less than three months, (individual maximum less than six months) and provide support for the first three years for all young people who develop a first episode of psychosis by 2004.

Methadone

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice her Department offers to patients who are prescribed methadone on where the medicine should be administered. [58378]

Caroline Flint: Patients are told that methadone and other prescribed drugs must be kept out of reach of children, and it is required that all medicines be provided in child resistant containers.

The Department published "Drug Misuse and Dependence—Guidelines on Clinical Management (1999)", which gives advice and assists general practitioners (GPs) and specialist drug treatment workers in giving appropriate substitute prescribing advice to patients.

The guidelines[1] advise that methadone dose consumption should usually be supervised by either the patient's GP, a nurse or community pharmacist for the first three months of prescribing. In the rare event that such initial doses are to be taken unsupervised, the dose should be set to minimise the risk of unsolicited use and methadone diversion.

Pharmacists are provided with training packs provided by the centre for pharmacy post-graduate education, "Opiate treatment: supporting pharmacists for improved patient care" which pharmacists are recommended to complete if taking part in the enhanced service to provide supervised consumption. This specifically covers the risks to children and opiate naive individuals of overdose.

Best practice guidance[2] to pharmaceutical services for drug users was published in February 2006 to help ensure the provision of verbal and written information on the safe storage of controlled drugs. Additionally, guidance for administration of medicine within pharmacies, which includes methadone, "The NHS community pharmacy contractual framework enhance service—supervised administration (consumption of prescribed medicines)", was published in September 2005.

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[1] Drug Misuse and Dependence—Guidelines on Clinical Management, 1999.

[2] Best practice guidance for commissioners and providers of pharmaceutical services for drug users, February 2006 (Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, national treatment agency for substance misuse, pharmaceutical services negotiating committee, PharMag, NHS).

NHS Audits

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of expenditure by NHS organisations on audits of local consultations in the most recent year for which figures are available; what assessment she has made of the merits of such audits; and how much has been spent by NHS organisations on contracts awarded to the communications consultancy Clear in the most recent period for which figures are available. [41996]

Mr. Byrne: Figures are not available centrally of any costs of audit relating to local consultations and a national assessment has not been made by the Department. National health service spend on communications consultancies are not collected centrally.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answers of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1322W, on NHS tariff uplift and 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 450W, on the health budget, why the extra costs of delivering the 18 week waiting time target in 2006–07 has not been reflected in the uplift to the NHS tariff in 2006–07. [59847]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The extra costs of delivering 18 weeks are reflected in increased activity rather than increased unit costs. The uplift in the national health service tariff reflects pay, price and reform pressures on unit costs.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the figure of £41 million which was referred to by the Minister of State, Lord Warner in the debate on the NHS Redress Bill, [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 15 February 2006, c. 1183] was arrived at. [59933]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* The calculation is based on the information, supplied by stakeholders, that the cost of independently investigating a complaint of a complex nature such as a clinical negligence case is on average approximately £2,500. At present, the number of claims settled for under £20,000 represents approximately 75 per cent. of settled claims. We expect a similar proportion to be covered by the new scheme. Exact numbers are hard to predict. However, as the scheme aims to make seeking redress more straightforward we expect more people to come forward. Modelling work within the Department, based on patient survey data, suggests that improved access to justice under the scheme may cause claims to rise by anything from 2,200 to 19,500 a year. In total, therefore, we expect the number of cases falling within the scheme to range between 5,800 and 16,600 in year one. If each case was subject to independent investigation, this would result in a total cost of between £14.5 to £41 million in year one.

NHS Litigation Authority

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the information available to the public *(a)* on medical negligence matters via the NHS litigation authority website and *(b)* on the credentials of members of relevant advisory panels. [62077]

Jane Kennedy: All matters relating to the content of the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA) website and the credentials of members of relevant advisory panels are the responsibility of the NHSLA board.

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many claims were made against the NHS Litigation Authority on behalf of severely disabled children in each year from 2001 to 2005. [62084]

Jane Kennedy: The NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA) administers claims made against national health service trusts and is not the legal defendant for clinical negligence claims. The table shows numbers of claims by notification year received by the NHSLA.

Number of claims made against NHS trusts and referred to the NHSLA of severely disabled children, 2001–05

Notification year to NHSLA	*Total*
2001–02	486
2002–03	353
2003–04	272
2004–05	243
2005–06	219

NHS Professionals

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of NHS Professionals has been since its inception. [48077]

Mr. Byrne: The Government have invested about £50 million in NHS Professionals since its establishment as a special health authority on 1 January 2004.

NHS Professionals is making a significant contribution to reducing the cost of temporary staff that any large-scale health care system inevitably needs.

Operations (Waiting Times)

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Prime Minister's Oral Statement of 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 813, what the evidential basis is for the Prime Minister's statement that no one waits more than six months for an operation. [62087]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 27 March.

Quality and Outcomes Framework

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1819W, on the Quality and Outcomes Framework, when she expects the University of Manchester national primary care research and development centre's evaluation of the impact of the Quality and Outcomes Framework on quality of patient care to be published. [58639]

Mr. Byrne: The national primary care research and development centre research project to assess the impact of the Quality and Outcomes Framework on quality of patient care involves a series of rounds of data collection. Analysis has now begun on the 2005 data. Following a process of quality assurance, the results are expected to be published in late summer.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what definition her Department uses of *(a)* sexual and *(b)* reproductive health; and if she will make a statement. [60854]

Caroline Flint: The Department aims to work to a comprehensive and holistic model of sexual and reproductive health as described in the 'National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV' (2001) as follows:

> "Sexual health is an important part of physical and mental health. It is a key part of our identity as human beings together with the fundamental human rights to privacy, a family life and living free from discrimination. Essential elements of good sexual health are equitable relationships and sexual fulfilment with access to information and services to avoid the risk of unintended pregnancy, illness or disease."

This holistic definition of sexual health is endorsed by the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV[1].

For the purposes of implementing national sexual health policy we consider that it includes programmes of work covering genito-urinary medicine (GUM) services, sexual health promotion and prevention of sexual ill health, including HIV prevention, sexual health diagnoses and treatment in non-GUM settings, contraception services and termination of pregnancy.

Mr. Simon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the priority her Department gives to improving access to sexual health services. [53176]

Caroline Flint: Sexual health was identified as a key priority in the public health White Paper, "Choosing Health", backed by major new investment of £300 million over three years and improved performance management to ensure delivery at local level. In particular, we are monitoring the progress towards targets to reduce the level of new infections of gonorrhoea, as a marker for all sexually transmitted infections, to ensure patients have access to genito-urinary medicine clinics within 48 hours by 2008 and numbers of screens undertaken in the chlamydia screening programme. These improved performance measures, should significantly strengthen the incentive for local investment and service modernisation.

In addition, the "Operating Framework for 2006/7 for the NHS in England" was published on 26 January. This sets out six specific service priorities for 2006–07 on which there will be a particular focus and are identified as a priority for action. One of the six is sexual health and access to genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics: to deliver the 2006–07 local delivery plan trajectories so that by 2008 everyone referred to a GUM clinic should have an appointment within 48 hours. This sends a clear message about the need to invest in GUM access and sexual health more broadly, and will support service re-engineering and modernisation.

Smoking

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that local authorities have sufficient resources from 2006–07 in order to enforce effectively the proposed ban on smoking in public places. [60467]

Caroline Flint: Following the commitment in the White Paper, "Choosing Health" that

> "we will be working with local government to assess the resources implications of relevant initiatives before they are implemented".

Departmental officials are in discussion with the Local Government Association and other key stakeholders on the detail of what resources will be needed. It is our intention that appropriate resources be in place to ensure smooth introduction of the smoke-free legislation.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of *(a)* replacing health authorities with primary care trusts and *(b)* replacing NHS regional offices with strategic health authorities was at 2005–06 prices. [42969]

Mr. Byrne: The costs of establishing strategic health authorities and primary care trusts were met from within the financial allocations to the health authorities and are therefore not identifiable.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 170W, on strategic health authorities, if she will publish the six-month forecast 2005–06 year-end financial position of each strategic health authority area. [60780]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 273–74W.

Terence Higgins Trust

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding her Department provides to the Terence Higgins trust. [52280]

Caroline Flint: The Terrence Higgins trust currently receives £2.025 million in funding from the Department.

Torbay Hospital

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to make a decision on the proposals for rebuilding Torbay hospital. [61100]

Caroline Flint: The full business case (FBC) for this scheme has been prepared and submitted to South West Peninsula strategic health authority (SHA) for approval. Following publication of "The NHS in England: the operating framework for 2006–07" on 26 January, South Devon Healthcare national health service trust will now need to revalidate the approval parameters for the scheme by responding to a range of questions from the Department concerning factors such as long-term affordability, assumptions on efficiency gains and income growth, liquidity, activity shift and reference cost.

The trust will then need to have its conclusions ratified by the Department before proceeding. Departmental officials will shortly be writing to all trusts with private finance initiative schemes explaining how this process will proceed.

Trans Fats

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether she has assessed the merits of placing a legal maximum on the level of trans fats in food in England; [60443]

(2) whether her Department *(a)* has made and *(b)* plans to make an assessment of (i) the technological feasibility of replacing trans fats in food with less harmful fats and (ii) the likely costs to the food production industry that would result; [60513]

(3) whether her Department *(a)* has made and *(b)* plans to make an assessment of the (i) potential effects on levels of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, obesity, omega-3 nutritional status, pre-eclampsia and atopic disorders and (ii) general public health effects of the imposition of legal maximums on the level of trans fats in food. [60515]

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[1] Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV, 'Response to the Health Select Committee Report on Sexual Health', January 2004.

Caroline Flint: In 1994, the committee on medical aspects of food policy (COMA) reviewed the evidence on the adverse effects of trans unsaturated fatty acids (TFA) on coronary heart disease risk and recommended that average intakes should not exceed 2 per cent. total energy. In 1986–87 average intakes were 2 per cent. total energy and by 2000–01 this had reduced to an average intake of 1.1 per cent. total energy. Intakes of saturated fat, however, at 13.4 per cent. are higher than the COMA recommendation of 11 per cent. The Government's priority therefore is to reduce saturated fat intake, and action to encourage reductions is under way. Opportunities to reduce TFA intakes are being considered in this wider context.

No assessment has been made of the feasibility, costs or health benefits related to placing a legal maximum on the occurrence of TFA in foods, and there are currently no plans to make such assessments. Some manufacturers and retailers have taken steps to eliminate, or reduce, hydrogenated vegetable oils, which contain TFA, in their products. Government have no data on the associated costs of these activities.

United Health

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the primary care trusts in which United Health are *(a)* providing and *(b)* due to provide primary care services; and what the nature of the services provided are in each case. [57167]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available centrally.

Waiting Times

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was between general practitioner referral and hospital treatment in each London borough in the North West London strategic health authority area in each of the last five years. [61145]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Measurement of the total patient pathway, from referral to treatment, will be in place in advance of 2008 to support delivery of the 18-week pathway. The Department is currently expected to commence monitoring of referral-to-treatment times across England from April 2007.

Since January 2006, the Department has been collecting information on diagnostic waiting times as well. The Department hopes to commence routine monthly publication of the diagnostics data in the spring once it is of sufficient quality.

TREASURY

Carbon Emissions

David Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the potential change in carbon emissions arising from the changes to vehicle excise duty announced in the Budget. [62089]

John Healey: The strengthening of environmental incentives announced in the Budget is designed to give a clear signal to motorists to consider the environmental performance of vehicles at the point of purchase and also to motor manufacturers in the development of new models. Estimates on the carbon savings arising from the Budget changes suggest a modest saving of around 0.06MtCe in 2010, though calculating this figure is complex and subject to a significant margin of error.

David Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the potential change in carbon emissions arising from the decision announced in the Budget to freeze air passenger duty. [62090]

John Healey: It is very difficult to make an assessment of the carbon effect from a freeze in APD rates due to the uncertainty of the effect this policy will have on the number of flights. Therefore no specific assessment has been made.

David Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the potential change in carbon emissions arising from the decision announced in the Budget to increase duty on liquid petroleum gas and natural gas from 1 September 2006. [62091]

John Healey: The LPG and CNG fuel markets constitute a relatively small proportion of the road fuel market, details of which can be found in Hydrocarbon Oils Duties bulletin and factsheets at: http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task = statindex

No specific assessment of the carbon effect of the increase in duty of LPG and CNG from 1 September 2006 has been made.

Economic Protectionism

David Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what response he made to the proposal from the Italian Finance Minister that he support a statement condemning economic nationalism and protectionism. [62078]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government are committed to openness in trade and investment. We strongly believe that further steps are needed to drive up competition in the EU single market, as set out in the Budget. The UK will continue to advocate reforms that deliver these policy outcomes and will continue to raise these issues with the Commission and member states.

Industrial Wages

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average industrial wage was in *(a)* England and *(b)* Northern Ireland in (i) 1995 and (ii) 2005. [61418]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 28 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the average industrial wage was in *(a)* England and *(b)* Northern Ireland in (i) 1995 and (ii) 2005. (61418).

The attached tables show statistics for industrial wages for both all Manufacturing jobs and all Production industry jobs.

Average earnings for 2005 are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

Average earnings for 1995 are estimated from the New Earnings Survey (NES), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition for NES. The NES also did not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The ASHE replaced the NES in 2004. The main difference between the ASHE and NES is that estimates are now weighted to population totals from the Labour Force Survey, and imputation is carried out for missing information. 2005 ASHE figures also include supplementary surveys to increase coverage. For these reasons there is a small discontinuity between ASHE and NES estimates provided.

The ASHE and former NES, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent. sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly (£) pay for full time employee jobs[1] by industry and place of work

	England		*Northern Ireland*	
2005	*Median*	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
Manufacturing Industries[2]	440	511	364	403
Production Industries[3]	443	515	370	416

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] Manufacturing Industries are defined as Section D of the Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2003 (SIC 2003).

[3] Production Industries are defined as Sections C to E of SIC 2003.

Notes:

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

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Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Gross weekly (£) pay for full time employee jobs[1] by industry and place of work

	England		*Northern Ireland*	
1995	*Median*	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
Manufacturing Industries[2]	299	337	230	262
Production Industries[3]	303	342	241	271

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] Manufacturing Industries are defined as Section D of the Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 1992 (SIC 1992).

[3] Production Industries are defined as Sections C to E of SIC 1992.

Notes:

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

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Source:

New Earnings Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress against the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda. [61016]

John Healey: At the 2005 Spring European Council, European leaders agreed to re-launch the Lisbon Strategy with a renewed emphasis on growth and jobs. Since 2001, average growth has been just 1.4 per cent, in the euro area and there are around 20 million unemployed.

Strengthening economic reform in Europe is a key priority for the UK. During the UK Presidency of the EU, member states submitted their first Lisbon National Reform Programmes which set out policies to promote growth, employment creation and productivity. The UK will continue to press for progress on this agenda.

Personal Debt

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the levels of personal debt were in each of the last two years for which figures are available. [61112]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 28 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question on the levels of personal debt in each of the last two years. (61112)

The current estimates of levels of personal debt are as follows:

	Amount (£ billion)
end-2003	1047.4
end-2004	1172.6
end-2005 quarter 3	1249.3

These estimates cover the debt of households and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). Estimates for households alone are not available. NPISHs are legal entities which are principally engaged in the production of non-market services for households and whose main resources are voluntary contributions by households. For example, charities; relief and aid organisations; educational establishments; Trade Unions; Professional Associations, Political Parties and Religious Organisations, and Sports Clubs and Associations.

Further data are available from table A64 in United Kingdom Economic Accounts (http://nswebcopy/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=1904&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=422).

PFI Contracts

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the estimated payments under private finance initiative contracts contained in Table C19 of the Budget of March 2006 are included in Departmental Expenditure Limits and fall within the Barnett Formula; and what percentage of such payments will be allocated to the Welsh Assembly budget under the Barnett Formula calculations for comparable expenditure. [62083]

John Healey: All central Government unitary charge payments made under the private finance initiative are included in Departmental Expenditure Limits. Further, revenue support grants to local authorities, which fund a proportion of local government unitary charge payments, are also in Departmental Expenditure Limits. The devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland receive block budgets. Changes in these budgets and revisions to Departmental Expenditure Limits feed through to devolved Administrations through the Barnett Formula. The devolved Administrations allocate their block budgets to services in accordance with local needs and priorities and it is a matter for the devolved Administrations to decide whether to purchase services through direct spending or via PFI schemes. Therefore all unitary charge payments from PFI projects signed by the devolved Administrations are paid for from the budgets of those administrations, as would be the case for an English Department.

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he expects his long-term estimate of the cost to public sector pension schemes published in the long-term public finance report to be revised. [61345]

John Healey: The projections of expenditure by unfunded public service pension schemes contained in the latest long term public finance report are consistent with the latest published accounts for those schemes. Changes to accounting assumptions on discount rates which affect the reported liabilities do not affect the cash flows. The cash flow projections will be reviewed as usual in preparation for the next long term public finance report.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 388, on public sector pensions, and the technical note placed in the Library, if he will break down the liability referred to in paragraph 12 by age of affected member in five year age bands. [61346]

John Healey: This information cannot be provided without disproportionate cost. Paragraph 12 of the Technical Note explained that differences between experience of pay increases in 2004–05 and long-term actuarial assumptions on pay increases accounted for £10 billion of the increase in liabilities reported by all unfunded public service schemes in that year, and that £7 billion of this was attributable to pay reforms in the NHS. A breakdown of the estimate by amounts attributable to members of schemes in different age bands is not available.

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has accounted for by his Department in each of the last five years for which data is available. [61354]

John Healey: This information is contained in HMT's resource accounts (in the note on staff numbers and costs). For the four years from 2001–02 these are available on HMT's public website at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about/resourceaccounts/resourceaccounts_index.cfm

The 2000–01 resource accounts—are available from the House of Commons Library (HC 573, 31 January 2002).

Tax Credits

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Government are taking to reduce delayed payment of tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [60228]

Dawn Primarolo: The vast majority of claimants get their payments on time.

HM Revenue and Customs are working hard to improve administration and address technical issues in order to minimise impact on claimants.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he will take to ensure that there is an adequate supply of tax credit application forms in West Dorset; and if he will make a statement. [61650]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax credits claim forms may be obtained by calling the national tax credits helpline or the national orderline.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many tax credit awards which had been terminated mid-year due to the return of an incomplete renewals form were subsequently found to be due to the unsuccessful scanning of the form by HM Revenue and Customs in the last period for which figures are available; [62074]

(2) in how many and what proportion of cases where a tax credit award was suspended due to the return of an incomplete tax credit renewals form HM Revenue and Customs *(a)* attempted to contact the claimant concerned for the missing information and *(b)* was successful in obtaining the information necessary for the completion of the renewal form in the last period for which figures are available; [62079]

(3) how many tax credit awards were terminated following the return of an incomplete tax credit renewal form in each year since 2003. [62080]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households have moved from having a tax credit award to no form of tax credit award mid-year; and what the reasons are for this occurring. [62081]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest annual information is for 2004–05 awards. About 600,000 tax credit awards were ceased or terminated during that year. The main reasons were:

(a) Couples separating, or single adults partnering;

(b) Families ceasing to satisfy the qualifying conditions (these are mainly responsibility for a child, or for a young person in full-time non-advanced education and aged under 19; or the family containing a disabled worker or an adult aged over 25 and working for at least 30 hours per week; and UK residence);

(c) The award being terminated, for example through failure to return the annual declaration for 2003–04, or to return a signed award notice.

For both ceased or terminated awards a household, or individuals from the household as part of a new household, may be able to apply for new, subsequent awards starting in the same year.

Tote

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list *(a)* financial institutions and *(b)* private equity houses with which he has discussed the sale of the Tote. [62082]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers discuss a wide range of issues with a variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of policy development and analysis. As was the case with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all these discussions.

Wildlife Souvenirs

Joan Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many wildlife souvenirs have been seized by HM Revenue and Customs each year since 2000; what the item was and from which species the item was derived in each case; and how many such souvenirs were from South Africa in each case. [60218]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs have interpreted wildlife souvenirs to be animals, plants or products of endangered species.

Details of seizures by HMRC of endangered species listed under Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein from 1999 to 2004 are available on the UK CITES website at www.ukcites.gov.uk/news/tradestatistics.

Seizures are recorded by the following categories : ivory, live animals and birds, parts and derivatives, traditional Asian medicines and other endangered species. The records show the country of origin, expressed sometimes as country whence consigned or country of last export. In some years the code ZA is used for the Republic of South Africa. HMRC records do not identify whether any of the items were purchased as souvenirs.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 29 March 2006

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leprosy

9. Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what bilateral aid his Department is giving to tackle leprosy; and if he will make a statement. [61833]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides targeted project support to tackle leprosy through the Leprosy Mission in India and the Leprosy Relief Association in Brazil. This funding supports community based efforts to improve access to care, reduce stigma and rehabilitate those affected. DFID commitment to these projects for 2005–6 is £196,453. Similar projects with other non-government organisations have recently ended in Brazil and Nepal. Overall DFID commitment from 2002 to 2008 is £1,152,453.

Global elimination of leprosy also requires integrating leprosy services into general health services and building the ability of general health workers to treat leprosy. DFID provides substantial support to strengthen health services in developing countries.

Mongolia

10. Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development How much his Department has given in aid to Mongolia in each of the last three years. [61834]

Mr. Thomas: The UK bilateral programme in 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 was £395,000, £267,000 and £231,000 respectively. The attributed UK share of EC expenditure from 2001 to 2003 was £400,000, £200,000 and £200,000 respectively.

Bilateral expenditure in 2005–06 was £200,000. This was accounted for entirely by the Small Grants Scheme. During 2005–06, it was agreed that responsibility for this scheme globally would be transferred to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The formal DFID bilateral programme in Mongolia is therefore coming to an end.

Middle East

11. Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development What recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank. [61835]

Hilary Benn: The humanitarian situation in the West Bank is currently relatively stable. Conditions in the Gaza Strip have worsened recently due to the closure of the main crossing at Kami. During the week of 20 March 2006 in the Gaza Strip there were severe shortages of essential foodstuffs.

Following the Palestinian elections, the political situation in the Palestinian territories is uncertain. Assistance to the next government will be judged against the Quartet principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and commitment to the peace process. However, programmes aimed at meeting Palestinians' basic needs will continue, including assistance for Palestinian refugees, which in 2005–06 amounted to £15 million.

World Relief Fund

12. Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made in establishing a world fund to provide rapid aid and relief at times of major disasters. [61836]

Hilary Benn: The United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was launched on 9 March 2006. This consists of a $50 million loan facility and a rant facility with an eventual target of up to $450 million. $255 million has been pledged by 38 donors so far. The UK is the largest single donor at $70 million (£40 million).

The first disbursement from the CERF of $950,000 has been made to protect Internally Displaced People in Cote D'lvoire. A disbursement for famine relief in the Horn of Africa is expected soon.

Sub-Saharan Africa

13. Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment he has made of agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa; and if he will make a statement. [61837]

Hilary Benn: Growth in agricultural productivity has been disappointing in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), agricultural output barely kept pace with population between 1961 and 2001, increasing from 40 to 116 million tonnes.

DFID believe that agriculture should be at the heart of efforts to reduce poverty. In December 2005, DFID launched a policy paper entitled 'Growth and poverty reduction: the role of agriculture', which sets out our priorities for action. Copies of this document have been placed in the Library of the House.

Horn of Africa (Famine)

14. Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development If he will make a statement on donor response to the famine in the Horn of Africa. [61838]

Hilary Benn: DFID has been the second largest bilateral donor, after the US, to the current relief effort in the Horn of Africa with a contribution so far of £35.9 million. The European Union is also making a major contribution. Other leading donors include Norway and Sweden. So far the overall donor response has fallen short of levels of funding requested by the UN. We will be reviewing our own funding next week when the UN issues an updated and revised appeal. We hope that other donors will follow our lead.

World Water Day

15. Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what activity his Department participated in to mark this year's World Water Day. [61839]

Hilary Benn: DFID and DEFRA participated in the World Water Forum in Mexico, which focused on achieving the MDGs through local actions. Themes discussed included the impact of climate change, corruption in the water sector, the right to water and the advantages of Sector Wide Approaches. I highlighted the importance of better coordination of UN Agencies working with water, with UN-Water as the mechanism for achieving this.

In the UK, DFID supported an awareness event in Bristol involving pupils from Teyfant Community School. Information such as a World Water Day Factsheet, was made available on our website for the general public, and an exhibition on 'drawing water' was held in DFID buildings, following the UNESCO theme for the day of 'Water and Culture'.

Bangladesh/Pakistan

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many official holidays staff at the Department's offices in *(a)* Bangladesh and *(b)* Pakistan receive per annum. [61578]

Mr. Thomas: In line with all DFID overseas offices, staff in Bangladesh and Pakistan receive 14 official holidays per annum. For 2006, they are as follows:

Bangladesh

1 January	New Years Day
11–12 January	Eid-ul-Azha
21 February	Shaheed Day
26 March	Independence Day
13 April	Bengali New Year Day
16 April	Easter Sunday
11 May	Bouddha Purnima
27 August	August Bank Holiday
2 October	Durga Puja
25–26 October	Eid-ul-Fitur
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

Pakistan

2 January	New Years Day
11–12 January	Eid Ul Azha
9 February	10th Muharram
14 April	Good Friday
17 April	Easter Monday
1 May	May Day
29 May	Privilege Day for HM the Queen's Birthday
14 August	Pakistan Independence Day
19–20 October	Eid Ul Fitr (precise dates dependent on the sighting of the moon)
22 December	Privilege Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

Capita Group

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* Ministers in his Department have held with directors and senior executives of (i) Capita Group plc and (ii) its subsidiaries since 1 January 2004; and whether (A) Capita Group plc and (B) its subsidiaries have provided input (1) in writing and (2) in person to policy discussions in his Department since 1 January 2004. [61072]

Hilary Benn: Neither myself nor my honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development have held meetings or had written communication with directors or senior executives of Capita Group or its subsidiaries since 1 January 2004.

Child Soldiers

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department is providing for programmes to reduce the number of child soldiers. [61760]

Mr. Thomas: The UK strongly supports UN Security Council Resolution 1612, condemning the use of child soldiers and backing Kofi Annan's action plan to reduce their number. DFID supports programmes in this area, in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), both from DFID resources and from Her Majesty's Government Global and African Conflict Prevention Pools.

For example, in the last year DFID has provided:

(a) Ongoing support to NGO network monitoring and reporting on children affected by armed conflict across the world, both as child soldiers and as non-combatants.

(b) Support to UNICEF HQ to build capacity and improve country programmes addressing children affected by armed conflict.

(c) Across Central Africa: support to the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme, a World Bank initiative funded by 11 donors including the UK, addressing the challenges of demobilisation and reintegration of members of national armies and armed groups in the greater Great Lakes region (covering Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC_, Burundi, Rwanda, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Uganda).

(d) In Uganda: support to war affected children and youth (including former child soldiers) in the northern areas through a variety of regional and international organisations.

(e) In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): support to UNICEF in a disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR) programme for children associated with armed groups.

(f) In Sudan: support to UNICEF in child soldier DDR and the return, reunification and reintegration of vulnerable children; support to a Preparatory Support Programme for DDR in Sudan, which will include a major focus on children associated with fighting forces.

(g) In Liberia: support to UNICEF for a programme on Education and Reintegration for Children Associated with the Fighting Forces, plus support to a broad-based Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme, which will include child soldiers.

(h) In Rwanda: support to Save the Children in studying how to improve conditions for girl soldiers undergoing DDR.

(i) In Sri Lanka: support to the UNICEF Children Affected by Armed Conflict programme and a complimentary Save the Children programme. UNICEF and Save the Children are working together to help prevent recruitment of child soldiers, to encourage forces to release children to their families and to reintegrate former Child soldiers into the community.

(j) As the recruitment of child soldiers depends heavily on the availability of small arms and light weapons, being light and easy to use, DFID also works closely with the FCO and MoD to reduce the number of small arms and light weapons in circulation, particularly in Africa.

Commission for Africa

Ann Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the future programme of the Commission for Africa. [62123]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa (CFA) ceased to exist after it launched its report in March 2005, although its website (www.commissionforafrica.org) has been established as a permanent resource for those interested in development and Africa.

The Commission's report set the tone for the unprecedented international attention that Africa received during 2005, not least the G8 summit. At Gleneagles, G8 leaders took up many of the Commission's recommendations and agreed a detailed set of commitments to tackle poverty covering areas including peace and security, good governance, human development and growth. To mark the first anniversary of the launch of the CFA report on 11 March 2006, the Government published a detailed report on the UK's contribution to taking forward the Commission's recommendations and to ensuring that the G8 deliver on their Gleneagles' commitments. This report, entitled "Implementation of the Commission for Africa recommendations and G8 Gleneagles' commitments on poverty": The UK's contribution', was deposited in the Libraries of the House on 9 March, and was also sent to all Members of Parliament.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many and what proportion of *(a)* staff and *(b)* new staff employed in (i) his Department and (ii) each of the agencies for which he has responsibility, were registered as disabled in each of the last three years for which data are available. [61383]

Mr. Thomas: The numbers of staff and new staff in DFID who have declared a disability in each of the last three years is as follows:

Number of staff declaring a disability as at 1 April in each year

	Number	Percentage of total
2003	23	1.4
2004	36	2.0
2005	42	2.2

Number of new staff declaring a disability in each financial year

	Number	Percentage of total
2002–03	4	2.4
2003–04	4	2.0
2004–05	3	2.4

The Cabinet Office also collects and publishes data from all departments on the numbers of staff who have declared a disability. The latest available information, for April 2004, is available in the Libraries of the House and on the Civil Service website at the following addresses:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/publications/xls/disability apr04

4novQ4.xls

for data relating to 1 April 2004, and

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/archive/index.asp

for previous reporting periods.

The figures published in these returns are rounded, and do not include data on the number of staff and new staff in DFID who have declared a disability.

Lesotho

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government of Lesotho's achievement of international debt repayment on funding of internal health and education programmes. [60919]

Mr. Thomas: In June 2005, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted a debt sustainability analysis (DSA) and concluded that Lesotho's debt levels were sustainable. This means it does not classify as a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC). Its annual interest payments on international debt in the financial year 2005–06 were 86.7 million Maloti roughly £8.2 million. Expenditure on health in that year was 390.3 million Maloti (approximately £37.2 million) and education 1128.6 million Maloti (approximately £107.5).

Interest payments on international debt were 1.8 per cent. of total Government expenditure, spending on health was 8.2 per cent. of Government expenditure and spending on education was 26.3 per cent. of Government expenditure.

The cancellation of Lesotho's international debt would not therefore, have significantly changed Lesotho's ability to fund health and education programmes.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to cancel the debt owed to the UK by the Government of Lesotho. [61130]

Mr. Thomas: The UK cancelled all eligible bilateral aid loans to Lesotho in 1979 under the Retrospective Terms Adjustment programme. Only one loan remains outstanding to the UK, with £329,000 due as the UK's share of a loan made with other, then European Economic Countries (EEC) member states through the World Bank. The UK is in the process of agreeing debt relief treatment on this loan with the other creditors.

Lesotho does not have any outstanding debt to CDC (formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation), but does have £1.66 million of outstanding debts to the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD). These cannot be cancelled by the ECGD outside of an international agreement by the Paris Club of Government creditors without full compensation to the ECGD by DFID. This would involve re-allocation of DFID's budget at the expense of other poor countries.

Lesotho is not a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC), and so is not eligible for the exceptional debt relief offered under the HIPC initiative. However, the UK is committed to ensuring debt relief for all low-income countries that can use the resources effectively for poverty reduction. DFID is currently providing assistance to the Government of Lesotho to strengthen its financial management systems. Once the country's public expenditure management systems are sufficiently robust to meet the entry criteria, the UK will begin paying 10 per cent. of Lesotho's debt service payments to the World Bank and African Development Bank under our multilateral debt relief initiative.

Somalia

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* bilateral and *(b)* multilateral aid and assistance the UK Government have provided for the current drought and famine in Somalia; and if he will make a statement. [61690]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provided the following bilateral aid:

£3.5 million to the World Food Programme's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (£1 million in December 2005 and £2.5 million in February 2006);

£500,000 has been contributed to UNICEF's drought response;

£1 million to OCHA's Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF), a flexible mechanism to improve the speed and appropriateness of emergency relief, NGOs can apply to the HRF for rapid funding of smaller emergency projects;

£1.5 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) humanitarian programmes in Somalia; and

£500,000 (approximately) being emergency medical and nutritional work of existing programmes in the drought affected areas.

On multilateral aid—most of the funding provided through UN agencies is earmarked to specific activities and is therefore included in the bilateral assistance above. The UK share of the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) expenditure is 17.25 per cent. Current ECHO expenditure in Somalia in response to the drought is €1,358,233. The UK share is therefore €237,689, or £164,020.96. The UK also contributes to other multilateral organisations, some of which may have contributed in response to the drought—for example the African Development bank has said it will provide $500,000 to the World Food Programme (WFP) for its operations in Somalia. However as these agencies will not report expenditure incurred in 2006 until the end of 2007, it is not possible to calculate an imputed UK share at this stage.

The UN issued a revised appeal for Somalia on 21 March for humanitarian operations for 1.7 million people that the UN judges are in need of urgent assistance. Of these it is estimated that 915,000 are experiencing a humanitarian emergency in the drought affected parts of southern and central Somalia. The revised appeal raises the amount requested for humanitarian operations from $174 million to $327 million; just over half of this is for food aid. Current contributions and commitments amount to $95.3 million. The UK is the second largest bilateral donor after the US.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development for which multilateral institutions working in Somalia the Government provides funding. [61691]

Hilary Benn: The majority of DFID funding is provided to three multilateral institutions, the UN system, the World Bank, and through the UK's contribution to the EC, which includes the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO). Support to the UN includes to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) for its Rule of Law Programme, the World Food Programme, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) for drought related activities, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) programme, UN-HABITAT for urban development work and to the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for education work.

With the World Bank, DFID is for example, supporting the joint needs assessment work they are co-leading with the UNDP to prepare a five-year reconstruction and development programme and a Community Development Programme. We also provide core funding to the African Development Bank that is providing support to the drought in the Horn of Africa.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the political and security situation in Somalia for the purposes of taking decisions on aid. [61692]

Hilary Benn: The political and security situation in much of south and central Somalia makes the provision of aid very difficult. Our assessments are led by the impact of:

competition for food, pasture and water that are made scarce by drought;

political conflict in the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs);

conflict for relief supplies and the contracts to provide them; and

inter-clan/faction conflict such as that in Mogadishu.

To minimise the risks, DFID works closely with other donors to support UN-led activity. Somaliland and Puntland are better governed and more secure, making delivery of assistance easier.

However, the establishment of the Transitional Federal Institutions provides the best opportunity for bringing lasting peace and governance to Somalia. The recent convening of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) in Baidoa, is a positive step forward after almost a year of political division. Parliament is the only institution which can give legitimacy to the transitional process and, as the most inclusive body of the TFIs, it needs to begin to operate. The parliamentary session in Baidoa marks the start of the resumption of the process of restoring central governance to Somalia. The international community agrees that supporting it is a priority, and we, with other donors, are providing funds for this.

The recent outbreak of heavy fighting in Mogadishu threatens the wider reconciliation process. I hope that those involved will stop the conflict and reach a settlement. Such fighting, together with the drought, currently worst affecting the south, demonstrates again why Somalia so badly needs a new government to bring stabilityA; and restore human rights and dignity to the people. DFID has responded to the drought with contributions totalling £7 million since December 2005; and our wider programme to help rebuild Somalia's destroyed social and governance sectors, and those in Somaliland, continues. This includes support to the restoration of public safety and security in Somalia, focusing on the re-establishment of policing, with £600,000 this year through the United Nations Development Programme. We also support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in developing the National Security and Stabilisation Plan requested by the UN Security Council.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his assessment is of the extent• to which political instability in Somalia has contributed to the current humanitarian situation. [61693]

Hilary Benn: The immediate cause of the current crisis in Somalia is an unusually severe drought. However, Somalia has been without a recognised central Government since 1992, and has seen repeated political conflict. This has certainly contributed to the severity of the current crisis.

An effective central authority could:

target resources to the worst affected communities;

help ensure the provision of basic services; and

could contribute to the safety and security of relief operations.

A government could also play a key role in co-ordinating development efforts in the country to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

The UK is helping to end the political instability by assisting with the establishment of the transitional federal institutions. The Transitional Parliament is currently meeting in Baidoa. Although there are considerable risks, as demonstrated by the continuing fighting in the capital Mogadishu, we believe this is the best opportunity yet for moving Somalia forward.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Efficiency Targets

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how much of the agreed efficiency target for the Law Officers' Departments set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52829]

The Solicitor-General: The table shows how much of the respective efficiency targets for the Law Officers' Departments is cashable.

£ million

Department	*2005–06*		*2006–07*		*2007–08*	
	Target	*Cashable*	*Target*	*Cashable*	*Target*	*Cashable*
Crown Prosecution Service	20.1	14.6	26.6	17.2	34.1	20.3
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office	0.73	0.73	1.46	1.46	2.17	2.17
Serious Fraud Office	1.13	0	2.0	0	2.815	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department[1]	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.4	1.5[2]	1.22

[1] Includes the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

[2] Of which £0.6 million relates to a reduction in capital expenditure which will not be re-spent.

The Law Officers' Departments will re-invest the cashable savings in the following activities.

Department	*Re-investment*
Crown Prosecution Service	Frontline activities such as Charging and meeting new workload pressures on frontline staff, IT system Compass, and case management system.
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office	Frontline activity such as in-house advocacy, case management and other workload pressures on prosecuting.
Treasury Solicitors Department	Increasing demand for services which are not rechargeable to clients.

TRANSPORT

Aircraft Noise

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department plans to introduce limits on maximum allowable peak aircraft noise levels. [60787]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State uses his powers under section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 to set departure noise limits on aircraft taking off from the designated airports, Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. At other airports noise management is the responsibility of the airport operator and in many cases, local planning conditions or other local agreements apply.

All civil aircraft operating in the UK must comply with relevant international noise certification requirements. The certification procedure requires determination of EPNL (Effective Perceived Noise Level) at three reference points; approach, lateral (sideline) and flyover and sets appropriate maxima. The requirements are incorporated into UK legislation by Statutory Instruments, such as The Air Navigation (Environmental Standards) Order 2002, SI 2002 No.798.

Concessionary Travel

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* proportion of local authorities that will be providing funding for the bus fare concessionary scheme of (i) up to £9,999, (ii) £10,000 to £19,999, (iii) £20,000 to £29,999, (iv) £30,000 to £39,999, (v) £40,000 to £49,999, (vi) £50,000 to £74,999, (vii) £75,000 to £99,999, (viii) £100,000 to £149,999, (ix) £150,000 to £199,999, (x) £200,000 to £299,999 and (xi) £300,000 and above. [61687]

Dr. Ladyman: None. The Government are providing local authorities an extra £350 million for 2006–07 through the formula grant system. The general consensus is that this will be sufficient in aggregate to fund the additional cost. It is up to each authority to reach agreement with their local operator on the level of reimbursement for carrying concessionary passengers taking account of local network conditions.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* technical, *(b)* logistical and *(c)* economic implications in areas where the concessionary travel scheme has been extended to allow cross-boundary travel. [61249]

Dr. Ladyman: None. We are introducing a national scheme in April 2008 which will allow older and disabled people free off-peak bus travel anywhere in England. In the interim, we are keen for local authorities to work together to provide cross-boundary or countywide schemes.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities in North West England have entered into reciprocal agreements to allow pensioners free travel across district and county borders. [62203]

Dr. Ladyman: All schemes must meet the statutory minimum entitlement by 1 April 2006. The Department does not yet have full details of the discretionary enhancements that will be offered by local authorities. We will carry out a comprehensive survey of concessionary fares schemes later in the year.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities in Lancashire have not entered into reciprocal agreements to allow pensioners free travel across Lancashire. [61550]

Dr. Ladyman: All schemes must meet the statutory minimum entitlement by 1 April 2006. The Department does not yet have full details of the discretionary enhancements that will be offered by local authorities. We will carry out a comprehensive survey of concessionary fares schemes later in the year.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been paid by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to Jodie Kidd for the recent advertising campaign on paying road tax via the internet. [61737]

Dr. Ladyman: The contract with Ms Kidd is a matter that is confidential between both parties.

Highways Agency Network

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many kilometres of lanes have been added to the Highways Agency network in each year since 1997; and what the cost per kilometre was in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms. [62181]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* The following table lists additional lane kilometres to the Highways Agency network, provided by publicly funded major schemes in each year since 1997, against their cost per kilometre in cash and real terms.

		£ million	
	Lane km added to HA network	*Cost per km in cash terms*	*Cost per km in real terms*
1997–98	433	1.8	3
1998–99	107	3.8	6.5
1999–2000	38	5.9	10.2
2000–01	117	1.8	2.7
2001–02	0	0	0
2002–03	224	0.9	1.2
2003–04	450	2	2.7
2004–05	191	1.2	1.6
2005–06	89	2.6	3.3

M18

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the subsidence between junctions 6 and 7 of the M18 will be eliminated from the road surface. [61809]

Dr. Ladyman: Following a recent study of the subsidence and cracking of the carriageway between Junctions 6 and 7 of the M18, a scheme is being developed to address this in the 2007–2008 financial year; subject to the availability of funding. In the meantime, the Highways Agency will continue to monitor and maintain the motorway in a safe condition.

M4

Martin Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the timetable is for the draw down of funding for planned improvements to the M4 motorway in Reading West constituency. [49833]

Dr. Ladyman: A scheme for improvements on and around Junction 11 of the M4, promoted jointly by Reading borough council and Wokingham borough council, has been provisionally approved for Local Transport Plan funding. We have received advice from the South East Regional Transport Board on its priorities for funding major transport schemes within its indicative allocation. The Board has given a high priority to this scheme, and recommends it receives funding for construction from 2008–09 onwards. We are currently considering this advice, and expect to set out decisions on the way forward later in the spring.

The Highways Agency is also studying potential measures to improve traffic flows and journey time reliability on the M4, including the section that passes through the Reading West constituency. Any improvement works that emerge from those studies will be considered for entry into the Targeted Programme of Improvements.

M62

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the likely cost of policing and enforcing the proposed car-share lane on the M62. [61762]

Dr. Ladyman: The West Yorkshire police have confirmed that they see the monitoring and enforcement of the high occupancy vehicle lane on the M62 as an extension of their existing role of policing the motorway network, and that they do not envisage additional costs.

Oil Spill Contingency Plans

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many UK ports have an oil spill contingency plan; and how many of those plans were updated in the last five years. [60275]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Currently there are 176 port and harbour oil spill contingency plans in the UK. It should be noted that in some circumstances an individual plan may be for more than one port or harbour. 63 of these plans have been updated in the last 5 years in order to obtain re-approval under the Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention) Regulations 1998.

Each OPRC oil spill contingency plan should be fully reviewed within five years of its submission to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). It must then be approved by the MCA so as to be valid for up to a further five years. Where any major change occurs which could effect the validity or effectiveness of a contingency plan a new plan must also be submitted for approval.

Programme Improvement Schemes (Cost Study)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on work being conducted by EC Harris for the Highways Agency to study inflation costs and predict future figures and costs for targeted programme improvement schemes; when he expects this work to conclude; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the final report. [61745]

Dr. Ladyman: EC Harris have provided an initial report on inflation in highway prices in September 2005, together with an update of the inflation figures quoted in that report in January 2006. Copies of the reports have been placed in the Library. EC Harris have been asked to provide further updates at quarterly intervals. In addition; the agency has asked other industry sources for advice on inflation pressures. Once analysed, the agency will take a view on what inflationary allowances should be allowed in their cost estimates. This work will be kept under regular review.

Red Diesel

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much red diesel has been used at airports in each of the last five years *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by airp[illegible] [61744]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold this information. It may be available from the airports themselves.

Road Building

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many motorway and trunk road building projects there were between 1988 and 1997; and what the total cost was in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms. [62183]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* There were 280 major improvement schemes completed between April 1987 and December 1996. The total main works tender cost of these schemes was approximately £5.1 billion, which at today's prices using the RCTPI (Road Construction Tender Price Index) in the latest financial quarter available for 2005, is £8.6 billion.

Road Improvement Costs

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake) of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2318–2319W on road improvement costs, whether the figures for the most recent estimate or final cost of each scheme represents the amounts paid to the scheme contractors in each case; and whether the Highways Agency is liable for additional costs in each case. [61749]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest agreed budget costs for projects, in the Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements, represent the current approved estimate of the full outturn cost. The budget cost estimates include an element for construction, alongside other costs, which will be paid in due course to the scheme contractor. Those estimates are routinely reviewed and may be subject to change as schemes progress.

Roads (Hard Shoulders)

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what factors are preventing hard shoulder running being introduced on the M42 before March 2007. [61555]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency will commence hard shoulder running on the M42 at the earliest opportunity and is on schedule to deliver by March 2007.

Hard shoulder running is one of the later phases of operation in the M42 Active Traffic Management Pilot and is dependent upon the introduction of new equipment, procedures, trained operators and an assessment it is safe to do. Time is also required for monitoring of preceding phases. This monitoring will be used to verify the pilot's safety plan and help evaluate effectiveness of a number of new technologies and different traffic management measures on tackling congestion.

Introducing these changes in phases also gives drivers the opportunity to become accustomed to the signs and signals and safely use the scheme prior to introducing the use of the hard shoulder.

South East England Regional Assembly

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the South East England Regional Assembly's recommendations on regional transport priorities. [62576]

Dr. Ladyman: The advice from the South East region on regional funding allocations-including recommendations on regional transport priorities-was sent to the Government in January. The advice can be found on the Department's website at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans_611223.hcsp

Taxis/Taxi-Buses

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to promote the use of taxi-buses. [61726]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Section 12 of the Transport Act 1985 allows a taxi owner to apply to the Traffic Commissioner for a bus operator licence. The taxi owner can then register a route with the Traffic Commissioner and provide a local bus service, interspersed with periods of conventional taxi operation.

The Department has published and distributed a guide to "Flexible Transport Services" which sets out the benefits of taxi-bus services and other flexible services. It includes advice on setting up a taxi-bus service. A copy is on the Department's website.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many *(a)* hackney carriage and *(b)* private hire drivers have been (i) stopped and (ii) suspended in each year since 1997 (A) in total and (B) broken down by local authority area; [61746]

(2) how many *(a)* hackney carriage and *(b)* private hire vehicles have been found to be defective since 1997; and how many in each case were impounded in each year since 1997 (i) in total and (ii) broken down by local authority area. [61747]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally. Local licensing authorities (district/borough councils or unitary authorities) carry out the taxi and private hire vehicle licensing function and are responsible for enforcement in their respective areas.

Traffic Lights

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's policy is on the use of part-time traffic light signals. [61674]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Current advice on part-time traffic light signals is that they are chiefly applicable to roundabouts during peak traffic flow periods, to prevent queues from building back on another road, often a motorway.

Transport Statistics

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average *(a)* number and *(b)* distance of trips as calculated by the National Travel Survey was by (i) car driver, (ii) car passenger, (iii) bus, (iv) walking and (v) other modes of transport for the purposes of (A) commuting, (B) business, (C) education, (D) escort education, (E) shopping and (F) other reasons, broken down by (1) sex and (2) those (v) under 17 years, *(w)* 17 to 29 years, (x) 30 to 49 years, *(y)* 50 to 59 years and *(z)* over 60 years in the latest two-year period for which survey results are available. [61748]

Dr. Ladyman: The information for 2003–04 has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Unregistered Mini-Motorcycles

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to take steps *(a)* to ban unregistered mini-motorcycles from public roads and *(b)* to provide safe areas for their off-road use. [62021]

Dr. Ladyman: It is already illegal to use unregistered mini-motorcycles on public roads. Enforcement is a matter for individual Chief Officers of Police.

I understand that the provision of safe off-road areas for these bikes is being considered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Trade and Industry, together with motorcycling organisations. Some off-road facilities already exist. Further, DEFRA has just issued a circular giving guidance on the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way and off-road in the countryside.

Visual Flight Rules

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish the regulatory impact assessment on the introduction of mode S transponders for visual flight rules operations. [61121]

Derek Twigg: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has drafted a partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). Subject to clearance from the Prime Minister's Panel for Regulatory Accountability, the CAA expects to release the partial RIA for public consultation in spring this year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bacup Shoe Company

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department is taking through its Paris office to facilitate the release of the consignment of shoes for the Bacup Shoe Company of Rossendale, which has been impounded by French customs [62069]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* The British Consulate-General in Lille has established that the French judicial authorities intend to carry out a full investigation into this consignment. I have written to my hon. Friend and will place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

EU Hazardous Substances Directive

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the EU Commission on exempting electronically motored pipe organs from the EU Directives on restrictions on hazardous substances and waste electrical and electronic equipment. [61880]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 March 2006]*: The Department of Trade and Industry continues to work closely with the European Commission on the RoHS and WEEE Directives.

The repair and refurbishment of existing pipe organs (both now and in the future) will not be affected; neither will pipe organs that are not reliant on electricity to function. A total exemption for the manufacture of new pipe organs from the substances restrictions of the RoHS Directive would require a formal application by the industry to the European Commission (under Article 5.1 b). The Department has offered to work with the industry to help them develop such a case.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations the UK Government made regarding pipe organs in relation to the EU Directive on Restrictions on Hazardous Substances; and what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the Directive on pipe organs; [60989]

(2) whether a regulatory impact assessment was conducted in relation to the effect of the EU Directive on Restrictions on Hazardous Substances on *(a)* organ makers, *(b)* organ users and *(c)* churches; and if he will make a statement. [61099]

Malcolm Wicks: The repair and refurbishment of existing Pipe organs (both now and in the future) will not be affected by the Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive; neither will pipe organs that are not reliant on electricity to function.

A total exemption for the manufacture of new pipe organs from the substances restrictions of the RoHS Directive would require a formal application to the European Commission under Article 5.1*(b)*. The Department has offered to work with the industry to help them develop such a case.

A Full Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) on the RoHS Directive was published in September 2005.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the *(a)* repair and *(b)* building of new lead organ pipes is included as a prohibited activity under the Directive 2002/95/EC due to be enforced from 1 July 2006. [61043]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 27 March 2006]*: No. The Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive applies restrictions on the presence of such substances in end products or equipment. It does not place any restrictions on the repair or manufacture of component parts.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to seek exemption for lead organ pipes from the proposed EU directive which would prevent their use. [61624]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 27 March 2006]*: The repair and refurbishment of existing pipe organs (both now and in the future) will not be affected by the restriction of hazardous substances directive; neither will pipe organs that are not reliant on electricity to function.

A total exemption for the manufacture of new pipe organs from the substances restrictions of the RoHS directive would require a formal application to the European Commission making a case under article 5.1b. The Department has offered to work with the industry to help them develop such a case.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many EU member states have exempted organ pipes under EU Directives 2002 95/EC and 2002 96/EC; [61023]

(2) what exemptions are being considered under EU Directives *(a)* 2002 95/EC and *(b)* 2002 96/EC; [61027]

(3) when exemptions under the EU Directives *(a)* 2002 95/EC and *(b)* 2002 96/EC will be announced. [61029]

Malcolm Wicks: No EU member state has exempted pipe organs from the scope of either Directive. There are over 50 exemption requests for specific applications of the restricted substances from the requirements of the RoHS Directive currently under consideration. Details of these are available on the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/weee_index.htm. We are dependent on the Commission's timetable for decisions on these.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Church Commissioners and *(b)* organ pipe manufacturers on EU Directives 2002 95/EC and 2002 96/EC. [61024]

Malcolm Wicks: None, but my officials have had discussions with representatives from the pipe organ industry.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed in the manufacture, installation and maintenance of organ pipes in the UK. [61025]

Malcolm Wicks: Industry estimates for the number of people employed in the sector in the UK are around 300 to 400 people.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate he has made of the number of organs in *(a)* chapels, *(b)* churches, *(c)* cathedrals, *(d)* cinemas, *(e)* town halls and *(f)* places of public entertainment which will be affected by EU directives (i) 2002 95/EC and (ii) 2002 96/EC; [61026]

(2) whether the *(a)* manufacture, *(b)* installation and *(c)* replacement of organ pipes will be exempted under EU directives (i) 2002 95/EC and (ii) 2002 96/EC. [61028]

Malcolm Wicks: The repair and refurbishment of existing pipe organs (both now and in the future) will not be affected; neither will pipe organs that are not reliant on electricity to function.

A total exemption for the manufacture of new pipe organs from the substances restrictions of the RoHS directive would require a formal application to the European Commission (under article 5.1b). The Department has offered to work with the industry to help them develop such a case.

G8 Meeting (Moscow)

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what matters in respect of nuclear reprocessing are on the agenda for the meeting of G8 energy ministers in Moscow on 16 March; and if he will *(a)* place in the Library and *(b)* post on his Department's website the papers distributed for the Moscow meeting. [59159]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* There were no matters in respect of nuclear reprocessing on the agenda of the meeting of the G8 energy ministers in Moscow on 16 March. The meeting concentrated on discussing issues relating to global energy security, promoting efficient markets and enhancing sustainability.

There were no papers distributed to participants of the meeting. The Chair's summary of the meeting can be found at http://www.minprom.gov.ru/G8/eng/news/10

India

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* regional development agencies and *(c)* trade delegations from the UK have visited India in each of the last three years. [59884]

Ian Pearson: The following Table sets out the number of visits to India by Ministers, RDAs and the number of outward trade missions from the UK for the period 2003–05. In addition to the visits listed, HRH Prince Charles visited India in 2003, and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister visited India in 2005.

The figure for the number of visits made by RDAs includes all of those visits of which we are aware. However, we do not hold a comprehensive list of visits by RDAs, as they are not obliged to supply this information.

	Ministerial visits	*Visits by RDAs*	*Outward trade missions*
2003	4	12	32
2004	7	13	38
2005	5	12	30

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget will be for domestic installations under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme in *(a)* 2006–07, *(b)* 2007–08 and *(c)* 2008–09; and on what date the Low Carbon Buildings Programme will be launched. [61676]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* Under the original £30 million budget allocation and following an informal consultation with industry the amounts that will be available for domestic household installations are:

£3 million

£2.5 million

£1 million.

On 23 March The Budget 2006 announced an additional £50 million for the Programme. The Department will be considering urgently with Treasury colleagues how this money should be allocated.

The new Programme will be launched on 3 April 2006. Information will be available at:

www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk.

Natural Environment Research Council

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the original Natural Environment Research Council capital budget was for the Environment Centre built at Lancaster university; and whether this changed during its construction; [60030]

(2) what the original budget for the Natural Environment Research Council's share of the annual running costs for the Lancaster Environment Centre was; and what its share has been in each year since its opening; [60031]

(3) what the capital value is of the Natural Environment Research Council Merlewood site; and whether there are plans for it to be sold; [60032]

(4) what the running costs for the Merlewood Centre for Ecology and Hydrology site were in each of the last three years; [60033]

(5) what estimate he has made of the cost of operating the Merlewood Centre for Ecology and Hydrology site over the next five years. [60034]

Barry Gardiner: The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). NERC's science budget allocation has doubled since 1997 to £334 million for this year. Following consultation on proposals to put CEH on a sustainable scientific and financial footing for the future, NERC Council announced on 13 March that it will proceed with the restructuring with various modifications reflecting issues raised in stakeholders' input.

I have asked the chief executive of NERC to write to the hon. Member about his specific requests for information on budgets and costs related to Lancaster Environment Centre and Merlewood.

Office for Civil Nuclear Security

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the current complement of staff at the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) have a first degree or further qualification in *(a)* nuclear physics and *(b)* nuclear engineering; and what qualifications the OCNS (i) Director and (ii) Deputy Director holds. [52429]

Barry Gardiner: The current complement of staff at the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) is 42, including the administrative and security vetting teams. None of them holds first degrees or further qualifications in nuclear physics or nuclear engineering. The release of the information requested in respect of the qualifications of the Director and Deputy Director of OCNS would or would be likely to contravene the first Data Protection Principle.

As a security organisation, OCNS requires its staff to have a wide range of knowledge and expertise in all areas of security, including physical, information and personnel security. Knowledge of nuclear physics and nuclear engineering is desirable, but not essential. Where such knowledge is necessary, the advice of the relevant agencies is sought, in particular from the Nuclear Industries Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive, with whom OCNS maintain a close working relationship at all levels.

Operating and Financial Reviews

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department held with other departments regarding the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 28 November 2005 of the decision not to proceed with a mandatory requirement for operating and financial reviews. [60909]

Alun Michael: Discussions took place between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the Chancellor in order to determine the best way forward and there was agreement by relevant departments on the decision announced by the Chancellor on 28 November 2006.

Post Offices

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices and sub post offices there were in Haltemprice and Howden constituency in each year between 1997 and 2006. [62146]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd (POL). Alan Cook, the Managing Director, has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Andrew Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the accounts of the Crown Post Office in Marvina Drive, Ellesmere Port for the last five years. [61724]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook, the Managing Director has been asked to reply directly to the hon. Member.

Postal Market Liberalisation

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the timetable for full liberalisation of the postal market. [61584]

Barry Gardiner: *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* The timetable for market liberalisation is a matter for Postcomm the postal regulator. Their decision was to fully open the UK postal market in January 2006. Further information can be found on their website http://www.psc.gov.uk/

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with which other European Union member states he has discussed the liberalisation of postal markets across the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [61585]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* DTI Ministers and their officials maintain ongoing dialogue with both the institutions of the European Union and the other member states.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Direct Consultancy Support

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria will be used to assess the suitability of local authority applications for direct consultancy support in the next two financial years. [60707]

Mr. Bradshaw: The focus of this year's programme of DCS is specialist support in waste planning; strategy; procurement; and waste composition analysis.

Support for projects will be based on the following criteria:

Evidence of need

Whether the authority facing performance issues that would benefit from direct support and whether they can demonstrate the added value of such support.

Impact of support

Whether the project assist the authority in overcoming the particular barriers and deliver demonstrable change. Evidence for this would be percentage increase in BVPIs or tonnage diversion from landfill.

Local authority commitment

Whether the authority is providing some matching resources. Defra is keen to derive the maximum value from support funding, but it is essential that authorities identify they have the resources to project manage a proposal.

Working together

This year it is a requirement that county and all its constituent district councils submit proposals as one. Defra is keen to support projects that encourage joint working. Defra will hope to disseminate any project results to a wider audience and supported authorities will be encouraged to positively promote their solutions to neighbouring authorities.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many local authorities have applied for direct consultancy support in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08; and what the type of authority is in each case. [60711]

Mr. Bradshaw: The initial deadline for applications to the Direct Consultancy Support Programme is 31 March for projects that need to get off the ground immediately, and the final deadline for projects in 2006–07 is October 31 2006. Some of these proposals may extend into both the 2006–07 and 2007–08 financial years.

At present we have received 11 (as yet unprocessed) proposals but given that it is usual for applications to arrive towards the end of the application window this is not of concern. Six proposals are led by Unitaries, four by Waste Disposal Authorities (on behalf of their county) and one by a Waste Collection Authority (on behalf of the rest of its county).

Fungaflor

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when she expects the product Fungaflor to be approved for sale in the United Kingdom; [60708]

(2) what discussions she has had with the Pesticide Safety Directorate in the last 12 months on the sale of the product Fungaflor in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [60709]

Mr. Morley: The Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD) withdrew the UK national approval for Fungaflor (containing the active substance imazalil) in December 2002, with two years allowed for use up of stocks already in the supply chain. This was in accordance with the requirements of an EC directive concerning the inclusion of imazalil on Annex I of Directive 91/414/EEC.

An application for approval of a new Fungaflor product in accordance with the requirements of Directive 91/414/EEC was subsequently made. However, this application did not contain sufficient information to allow PSD to complete a risk assessment demonstrating an acceptable risk to humans and the environment and it was therefore refused. No further applications have been made.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has had no discussions with PSD in the last 12 months on the sale of the product Fungaflor in the United Kingdom.

Landfill

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's latest estimate is of the total amount of landfill capacity available in England. [61563]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 1999, the Environment Agency published Strategic Waste Management Assessment Reports covering the nine planning regions of England. These indicated that an estimated remaining capacity of all licensed landfill sites in excess of 27 billion cubic metres.

The Environment Agency is currently assessing void capacity of landfills in England at 2004–05. Their findings will be published later this year.

Mobile Telephones

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of used mobile telephones were recycled in the last year for which figures are available. [61102]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Department does not collect recycling or reused information on mobile phones.

Organ Pipes

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many organ pipes have been disposed of on landfill sites since 2002. [61030]

Mr. Bradshaw: No data are available on the information requested. However, I would expect recyclable organ pipes would be sent to scrap metal facilities rather than to landfill.

Recycling

Jessica Morden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what total amount of waste was recycled in England in 2005; and what percentage this was of the total waste generated during the period. [61301]

Mr. Bradshaw: The latest available data for England estimate that 80 million tonnes of waste was either recycled or reused in 2002–03. This amounts to 43 per cent. of total waste produced by households, commerce and industry (including construction and demolition). Other sector waste including waste from mines and quarries, sewage sludge, dredged materials and agriculture have been excluded.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many recycling points there are per 1,000 population in (*a*) the constituency of Lancaster and Wyre, (*b*) Lancashire and (*c*) England. [61325]

Mr. Bradshaw: Requested figures, based on the 2003–04 Defra Municipal Waste Management Survey and 2003 mid-year population estimates are as follows:

	Recycling points per 1,000 population
Lancaster City Council	0.21
Wyre Borough Council	0.41
Lancashire[1]	0.24
England	0.41

[1] Lancashire includes the two postal Lancashire Unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.

Notes:

Recycling points are civic amenity and recycling sites within the area.

Data at constituency level are not available.

River Pollution

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she is taking to prevent endocrine disrupting chemicals from entering the river system. [59684]

Mr. Morley: There are a range of chemicals that may have endocrine disrupting effects, and these can come from a variety of sources. Many chemicals considered to be endocrine disrupters (EDCs) have been subject to bans or other regulations for some time, such as the pesticide dieldrin. Measures have already been taken on antifouling paints based on tributyltin (TBT) compounds that were found to cause endocrine disrupting effects in some marine organisms.

More generally, where particular chemicals have been strongly implicated as EDCs, the UK has proposed that these should be subject to a full risk assessment under European Regulations, so that where risks are identified European-wide measures are taken to control them. Endocrine disrupting chemicals will also be considered for authorisation under the new REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) regulations.

My Department has also invested in research and development to improve our understanding of the risks to the environment of endocrine disrupting chemicals from other sources. In addition, an Endocrine Disruptor Demonstration Programme is soon to commence aimed at testing the effectiveness of various measures to remove EDCs from the effluent of sewage treatment works and informing future regulatory decisions.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what studies her Department has commissioned into the effects on fish of endocrine disrupting chemicals. [59685]

Mr. Morley: My Department has commissioned extensive research to improve our understanding of the possible effects on fish caused by exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals.

For the freshwater environment, we have made a considerable contribution to collaborative investigations into the potential impacts of sewage effluents on two common lowland fish species, roach and gudgeon. A further study, part of the EDIT (Endocrine Disruption in Invertebrates and Top Predators) Programme, costing around 0.5million in total, has been conducted on the top predator, pike. A new collaborative research programme (EDCAT-Endocrine Disruption in Catchments) has recently been commissioned to look into possible impacts of endocrine disrupting sewage discharges on roach and sticklebacks at the population level; EDCAT will cost around £1.4 million in its initial phase alone.

We have established specific programmes of research on endocrine disruption in the marine environment, including the £1.5 million EDMAR (Endocrine Disruption in the Marine Environment) Programme, which conducted studies on flounder, goby, blenny and migratory trout and salmon. Additional research has focused on cod.

Work is now being conducted to develop an understanding of the effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals upon sensitive stages in the development of fish and to establish international test protocols for screening new chemicals for endocrine disrupting effects using the stickleback. The latter forms part of the Endocrine Disruption in Aquatic Ecosystems (EDAQ) Programme, costing over £1 million.

Two studies on fish also form part of the core projects of the UK-Japan research collaboration agreement on endocrine disruption in aquatic systems.

Further information on completed Defra endocrine disruption research projects is available from the Defra website at:

http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/Default.asp

DEFENCE

Apache Helicopters

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 868–9W, on Apache helicopters, what were the reasons for the four-year delay in reaching the full complement of trained Apache helicopter pilots. [57065]

Mr. Ingram: The fact that the full complement of Apache Attack Helicopter (AH) pilots will not be achieved by the target date of July 2006 is due to a combination of factors. The main reason was a shortfall of qualified helicopter instructors (QHIs). This has been an enduring issue that has had a marked impact on the quantity of pilots being trained for front line operational units. The original assumption (based on our experience of Lynx and Gazelle training, and advice from subject matter experts) was that a single instructor could train two AH students. However, once training began it became apparent that this assumption was unworkable and the training effort had to be switched in order to generate more instructors. This effectively reduced the pilot delivery rate to the field army. The plan to generate more instructors was further undermined when six QHIs elected to leave the Army shortly after the expiry of their four year time bar. Given that it takes up to 11 months to train an AH instructor, as opposed to six months to convert a pilot, the output of AH qualified pilots has remained lower than planned. Other factors, such as aircraft availability and weather, have exacerbated the situation.

Armed Forces Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of members of the armed forces pension scheme joined the scheme *(a)* before the age of (i) 20, (ii) 25, (iii) 30, (iv) 35, (v) 40 and (vi) 45 and *(b)* when they were over 45 years. [61395]

Mr. Touhig: Service personnel do not actually elect to join the Armed Forces Pension Scheme; membership is automatic for all from age 18, for non-commissioned ranks, and age 21, for officers, or upon joining the service, whichever is the later.

Eligible widows/widowers of service personnel receive benefits under the scheme from the day following the date of death. Eligible children of deceased service personnel normally receive benefits until age 17, or until full-time education has ceased.

Iraq

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel from the 2003 invasion of Iraq on Operation Telic have since developed symptoms similar to those experienced by personnel from Operation Granby. [44225]

Mr. Touhig: Information on all the illnesses reported by service personnel who have served on Operation Telic is not held centrally. Although the medical records of individuals who have left the services are held by each service at individual central locations, the records of personnel who are still serving are normally held at their unit medical centre.

As a result of the lessons learned during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict, the MOD put in place a large scale and longer-term epidemiological research plan to monitor the physical and psychological health of personnel who served in Operation Telic. If any unusual patterns of illness are found, they will be addressed as soon as possible. This research is being undertaken by King's College, London and is subject to independent oversight. The results are expected to be published this summer.

Nuclear Deterrent

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone) of 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 873W, on the nuclear deterrent, when he expects the preparatory work on possible options for the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent to be completed; how many personnel are involved; and at what annual cost. [61840]

John Reid: It is too early to say how long it might take to complete the preparatory work in advance of decisions on the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent. It remains the case that decisions are likely to be taken in the course of the current Parliament but, as I said during Defence Questions on 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1153, I am unlikely to receive papers on this for some time.

As I said during Defence Questions on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 692, there are five people within my Department working full time on policy relating to the future of the UK deterrent. A number of other personnel are working part or full time on other aspects of this issue, but it is not possible to give a precise figure for the number of people involved in the process.

On costs, I have nothing to add to the answer I gave previously to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis) on 14 June 2006, *Official Report*, columns 333–34.

Privatised Companies

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to ensure that those functions of his Department and its associated public bodies which he plans to privatise are not undertaken by companies based in countries whose interests conflict with those of the UK. [61723]

Mr. Ingram: Proposals to vary the future ownership arrangements for any part of the Ministry of Defence, or associated bodies, are fully assessed against wider national and foreign policy interests.

SA80 Rifle

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will issue the SA80 assault rifle to C130 crews for self-defence purposes; and if he will make a statement. [61142]

Mr. Ingram: Royal Air Force Air Transport and Air Refuelling Squadrons have the flexibility to decide which weapons their crews should carry. RAF C130 aircrew operating in the most hostile environments have been carrying the SA80 weapon for many years.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what are the terms of the holiday time and pay of Territorial Army personnel on *(a)* a three month operational deployment and *(b)* a six month deployment; [61031]

(2) what the average pay is for Territorial Army *(a)* privates, *(b)* NCOs and *(c)* officers on deployment. [61033]

Mr. Touhig: Members of the Territorial Army are paid the same daily rate of pay as regular soldiers throughout their period of mobilisation, according to their rank, trade and length of service. Any difference between the pay of reservists while mobilized and their normal Civilian earnings is paid by the Ministry of Defence up to a limit of £200,000 per annum. Reservists can also claim for additional expenses they incur as a result of being mobilised—for example additional costs of childcare or care of a dependant relative.

The information requested relating to the average pay for Territorial Army *(a)* privates, *(b)* NCOs and *(c)* officers on deployment is not held centrally and can only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Following three months of mobilised service in an operational theatre, an individual will be entitled to 19 days leave (eight days annual leave and 11 days Post Operational Tour Leave (POTL)). Following six months of mobilised service in an operational theatre, an individual will be entitled to 36 days leave (15 days annual leave and 21 days POTL).

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the new terms and conditions of service for the Territorial Army. [61035]

Mr. Touhig: Terms of service for Territorial Army officers will be amended with effect from 1 April to allow for a common retirement age of 60, thus standardising previously disparate practice and removing the need for officers below the age of 60 to apply each year for an extension to service.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many *(a)* Territorial Army recruits have been enlisted and *(b)* Territorial Army personnel have qualified to become deployable in each of the last five years, excluding the Officer Training Corps; [61037]

(2) how many Territorial Army (TA) recruits have been enlisted in each of the last six months; and how many TA personnel have left. [61036]

Mr. Touhig: Figures on the number of recruits are only available for the past two years. 5,710 recruits enlisted into the Territorial Army in 2004 and 6,430 in 2005. The number of recruits who have qualified to be deployable is not held centrally but the trained strength in each of the past five years is shown in the following table. All trained personnel may be deployed providing they are medically fit and have not been deployed within the timescales outlined in the Reserve Forces Act 1996.

As at April each year	*Number*
2001	29,520
2002	27,800
2003	26,730
2004	25,630
2005	24,310

The number of personnel enlisted and leaving in each of the past six months is shown in the following table:

	Inflow	*Outflow*
August 2005	550	720
September 2005	470	720
October 2005	590	460
November 2005	770	540
December 2005	370	270
January 2006	510	660

Note:
These figures exclude Full Time Reserve Service, Non Regular Permanent Staff and Officer Training Corps. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10, and numbers ending in 5 to the nearest 20 to avoid systematic bias. The inflow figures include all inflow except personnel returning from mobilization. The outflow figures include all outflow except those who are mobilizing. Recruit is deemed to be anybody joining the strength of the TA.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many residents of Northern Ireland are serving in the Territorial Army. [62100]

Mr. Touhig: As at 28 February 2006 the strength of the Territorial Army (TA) in Northern Ireland was 1,560, including the Queen's University Officer Training Corps (QUOTC) which is a Type B TA unit. The strength excluding the QUOTC was 1,339.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Territorial Army barracks in Chorley. [62217]

Mr. Touhig: I am pleased to observe that, as a result of Territorial Army (TA) Rebalancing, there will be an increased TA presence at the TA Centre in Chorley. The current medical detachment will become C Medical Squadron of 5 General Support Medical Regiment, increasing by up to 110 personnel. Additionally, a new detachment of 55 Military Intelligence Company of 5 Military Intelligence Battalion will be established there resulting in a further increase of about 18 personnel. It is currently planned that these changes will be fully implemented by late 2006.

Veterans

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2006 to question 59698, on veterans, if he will place in the Library the minutes of the *(a)* Veterans' Executive Steering Group meeting on (i) 11 October 2005 and (ii) 17 January 2006 and *(b)* the Veterans' Forum on 6 December 2005. [61492]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* I have arranged for copies of the minutes of these meetings to be placed in the Library of the House.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 201W, on the 2012 Olympics, what analysis has been undertaken of *(a)* the nature of the contamination and *(b)* the (i) type and (ii) concentrations of pollutants; what involvement local authorities have had under Part IIA of the 1990 Environment Protection Act 1985; and what soil guideline values have been used. [61510]

Mr. Caborn: Site investigations are currently being carried out to characterise the nature of the ground conditions and the level of contamination. These investigations will be carried out in accordance with current industry best practice to identify the exact type and concentrations. The investigations are following the principles set out in the Intrusive Investigation Method Statement approved by the London boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, the Environment Agency and British Waterways. I am arranging to have copies of the statement placed in the Libraries of the House.

The London Development Agency has been informed by the London boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest that there are no part IIA designated contaminated sites within the Olympic Park boundary. The boroughs have been consulted throughout the preparation of the environmental impact assessment, during the site investigation phase and will continue to be consulted throughout the development of the remediation and validation works.

Generic site specific soil target values have been generated and are detailed in a Global Remediation Strategy which has been reviewed and approved by the same regulators noted above. Once the site investigation is complete, detailed remediation strategies, including generation of site specific clean up targets, will be prepared and agreed with the regulators as appropriate prior to implementation and validation. All of the sites to be remediated will be subject to detailed planning applications.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the decontamination process to contaminated land on the London 2012 Olympic Site will *(a)* delay building work and *(b)* increase the costs; and if she will make a statement. [61779]

Mr. Caborn: A time allowance for land remediation has been built into the overall project timetable, as has a budget to cover such work. There is no reason at present to expect the cost of such work to exceed the budget.

Casinos

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many of the applications for casino licences under the Gambling Act 1968 in the last 10 years were made under a D2 leisure planning re-classification. [61547]

Mr. Caborn: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for East Devon (Mr. Swire) on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 14–15W, on gambling, if she will break down the number of applications by location. [61548]

Mr. Caborn: Further to the answer to the hon. Member for East Devon (Mr. Swire) 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 14–15W, the table sets out the locations of the applications for certificates of consent in respect of new casinos and substituted, extended or altered premises that were received by the Gambling Commission from 1997–98 until the present.

Two minor adjustments have been made to the figures given in the previous answer. The Gambling Commission has revised downwards the figure for applications for certificates of consent for new casinos in 2000–01 from 7 to 6. The total number of applications for new casinos in 2004–05 was 23, not 25, and the number of applications for substitute, extended or altered premises in 2004–05 was 6, not 4.

	New Casinos	*Substitute/extended/ altered premises*
1997–98	Nottingham Salford	Birkenhead Glasgow Leeds London (4) Newcastle Southend
1998–99	Birmingham Blackpool Hull Liverpool Luton Northampton Southend Walsall	Birmingham Hull Lytham St. Annes Margate Teesside
2000–01	Birmingham Liverpool London Manchester Teesside West Bromwich	Great Yarmouth Hull London Manchester (2) Plymouth
2001–02	Bristol Leicester (2) Southampton Stockport	Huddersfield Portsmouth Sunderland
2002–03	Blackpool (2) Bradford Newcastle Northampton Stockport Stoke Swansea Warley Wolverhampton	Birmingham Cardiff (2) Glasgow Northampton
2003–04	Aberdeen Birmingham Bolton Bristol Glasgow Newcastle Nottingham (2) Scarborough Swansea Walsall Wolverhampton	Bradford Manchester Ramsgate
2004–05	Aberdeen Birmingham Blackpool Bradford Bristol Coventry Derby Dudley Dundee Hull Leeds (2) Leicester Liverpool London (2) Reading Sheffield Southend Swansea Teesside (2) Warley	Brighton Liverpool Manchester Portsmouth Southend Swansea
2005–06 (to end February 2006)	Aberdeen (2) Birkenhead Birmingham (2) Blackpool Brighton (2) Bristol Cardiff (2) Coventry Edinburgh (3) Glasgow (2) Great Yarmouth Leeds(3) Leicester Liverpool (3) London (11) Luton Margate Manchester Middlesbrough Newcastle (2) Northampton Nottingham Reading Sheffield Walsall	Aberdeen London (3) Nottingham Reading Southampton Stoke

Dance

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what action her Department is taking to promote and invest in dance; and if she will make a statement. [61767]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS sponsors Arts Council England to promote and invest in the arts, including dance. Since 2002–03 there has been an increase in Government funding for dance of 22.4 per cent.

In 2006–07 the Arts Council will invest £33 million in dance. This funding will support dance companies and organisations across the country to deliver and promote dance. The Arts Council provides a further £26 million for combined dance and other art, organisations and projects.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many and what proportion of *(a)* staff and *(b)* new staff employed in (i) her Department and (ii) each of the agencies for which she has responsibility were registered as disabled in each of the last three years for which data is available. [61374]

Mr. Lammy: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of staff in departments who have declared a disability. Declaration of a disability is voluntary.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the Civil Service website and the following addresses. http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls for data relating to 1 April 2004, and http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/archive/index.asp for previous reporting periods.

The number of new staff employed in each of these years was fewer than five and is protected from disclosure under the DCMS Code of Practice on equal opportunities monitoring.

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Diana Memorial Fountain

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department had with *(a)* the Health and Safety Executive and *(b)* the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents regarding the safety rules at the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain prior to its opening in July 2004. [61633]

Mr. Lammy: On 12 September 2002, the Health and Safety Executive was notified of the project on their standard form F10: Notification of Project, as required under the CDM Regulations 1994. There was no further discussion with the HSE prior to opening, and it is not normal practice to do so. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) was consulted in December 2002 about the memorials design, and in June 2004 was asked to advise on any further safety measures that should be taken before the memorial was opened to the public. RoSPA's recommendations were implemented.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department made of the safety rules at the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain prior to its opening in July 2004. [61634]

Mr. Lammy: Before the memorial opened The Royal Parks Agency commissioned an independent operational risk assessment and implemented its findings. It also consulted The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) which advised that, because of the unusual nature of the site, safety measures would need to be closely monitored during the first months of operation until patterns of visitor behaviour became clear. When a persistent problem was identified, The Royal Parks acted swiftly to close the Memorial while designers, engineers and health and safety experts revised the management of the site.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate her Department made of the likely visitor numbers to the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain prior to its opening in July 2004. [61635]

Mr. Lammy: The Department estimated that there would be one million visitors to the memorial in its first year after opening, and between 500,000 and one million in subsequent years.

Digitisation Plan

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to implement the Dynamic Action Plan for the EU Coordination of Digitisation of Cultural and Scientific Content. [61637]

Mr. Lammy: The Government value the importance of digitisation—it is an important means of increasing access to cultural and scientific resources and making them available online in a form that is easy to find and interesting to use.

The National Representatives Group for the EU Co-ordination of National Digitisation Policies (NRG) will be responsible for implementing the Dynamic Action Plan within the EU. Activities carried out by the NRG already include identifying and comparing digitisation practices, setting technical standards across Europe and developing best-practice guidelines. During the Austrian Presidency of the EU, the NRG will launch five groups, each taking responsibility for one area of the Dynamic Action Plan.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in her Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45-years-old. [62005]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested on the ages at which the Department for Culture, Media and Sport employees' joined the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has been accounted for by her Department in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61367]

Mr. Lammy: The amount of employers' accruing superannuation liability charges in respect of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is published annually in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Resource Accounts in the note on staff costs. Copies are placed in the Libraries of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work Scheme

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of assessing entitlement to support under the Access to Work scheme in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [62097]

Mrs. McGuire: Jobcentre Plus does not collect discrete statistics on the cost of assessments. Some Access to Work customers do not require an assessment, while others are assessed by the most appropriate person. This could be an external expert in the particular disability or an adviser at a Regional Access to Work Business Centre.

Benefit Claims

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in what circumstances a relative may claim benefits on behalf of an elderly dependent member of the family who does not live locally. [59446]

Mr. Plaskitt: A relative who is the formal representative, such as an attorney or a Secretary of State appointee, may claim on behalf of a family member in all circumstances.

A relative who has not been formally authorised as a representative may still make a claim on behalf of an elderly family member. The relative can complete a claim form in writing or, in the case of pension credit or state pension, supply the necessary information by telephone. However, in the case of an informal representative, the elderly family member must still sign the claim form both to affirm that the information given is correct and complete and to validate the form as their claim to benefit.

When the Pensions Transformation Project completes its roll out, an informal representative may make a claim on behalf of a family member without a signature being required. In addition to confirming that the family member has given consent for a claim to be made on their behalf, the representative will be asked further questions for verification and security purposes.

Benefits (Administration Costs)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the administration costs were for *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* disability living allowance, *(c)* industrial injuries disablement benefits and *(d)* jobseeker's allowance in each of the last three years. [61782]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department accounts for its administrative expenditure by strategic objective as set out in its public service agreements (PSA) and by individual requests for resources (RfRs) as set out in the departmental estimates and accounts, and not by benefit. Information on administrative expenditure by strategic objective is available in the annually published departmental report, copies of which are available in the Library.

Benefits (Medical Assessments)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many medical assessments took place to assess entitlement for *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* disability living allowance and *(c)* industrial injuries disablement benefit in each of the last three years; and at what total cost. [62098]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Number of medical assessments carried out[1]

	April to March		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Incapacity benefit	1,722,675	1,627,630	1,549,630
Disability living allowance	437,862	414,870	363,335
Industrial injuries disablement benefit	115,119	97,112	85,949
Annual cost excl. VAT (£ million)	63.5	60.7	53.7

Note:

Figures include examinations and advice that took place to assess entitlement for incapacity benefit, disability living allowance and disability living allowance.

Source:

Medical Services MI

Cold Weather Payments

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received cold weather payments so far in 2006 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by parliamentary constituency. [61783]

Mr. Plaskitt: The total number of people who have received cold weather payments so far in the winter of 2005–06 in Great Britain is estimated to be 650,000. A breakdown by parliamentary constituency is not available.

Notes:

1. This figure is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

2. If the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0°C or below over seven consecutive days at a weather station, then a cold weather payment is "triggered" for all eligible customers whose postcode is linked to that weather station.

3. The number of people who are estimated to have qualified because the weather station linked to their postcode has triggered was obtained from the benefit systems at the end of October 2005. It excludes people on income support and income-based jobseeker's allowance who qualified because they had a disabled child aged five or over and who received support for that child via child tax credit.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the locations of weather stations from which information is collected to assess entitlement to cold weather payments. [61785]

Mr. Plaskitt: The weather stations used to collect information in order to assess entitlement to cold weather payments are:

Aberporth
Albemarle
Andrewsfield
Aultbea
Aviemore
Bedford
Bingley
Bishopton
Boltshope Park
Boscombe Down
Boulmer
Braemar
Brize Norton
Capel Curig
Cardinham
Carlisle
Cassley
Charlwood
Chivenor
Coleshill
Coltishall
Crosby
Culdrose
Dundrennan
Dunkeswell Aerodrome
Dyce
Edinburgh Gogarbank
Eskdalemuir
Flyingdales
Great Malvern
Heathrow
Hersmonceux West End
High Wycombe
Hurn (Bournemouth Airport)
Isle of Portland
Kinloss

Kirkwall
Lake Vyrnwy
Lerwick
Leuchars
Linton on Ouse
Liscombe
Loch Glascarnoch
Loftus
Lusa
Lyneham
Machrihanish
Manston
Marham
Nottingham
Pembrey Sands
Plymouth
Rhyl
St. Athan
St. Catherine's Point
St. Mawgan
Salsburgh
Scilly St. Mary's
Sennybridge
Shawbury
South Farnborough
Stornoway Airport
Thorney Island
Tiree
Tulloch Bridge
Valley
Waddington
Walney Island
Wattisham
West Freugh
Wick Airport
Wittering
Woodford
Yeovilton

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will reply to the letter of 31 January from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [57640]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 29 March 2006]*: I replied to the hon. Member on 27 March 2006.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time is for the Child Support Agency cases to spend in *(a)* the pre-application stage, *(b)* the application stage, *(c)* the information-gathering stage and *(d)* the calculation and collection set-up stage before first payment is received for (i) cases from parents with care receiving income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance, (ii) cases from parents with care not on income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance and (iii) all cases. [18787]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Hilary Reynolds:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is currently unavailable as he is communicating the Operational Improvement Plan to all Agency staff. I am responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time is for the Child Support Agency cases to spend in *(a)* the pre-application stage *(b)* the application stage *(c)* the information-gathering stage and *(d)* the calculation and collection set-up stage before first payment is received for (i) cases from parents with care receiving income support or income related jobseeker's allowance (ii) cases from parents with care not on income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance and (iii) all cases.

The CSA does not collect data in exactly these categories but such information as is available is set out in the tables attached, together with notes describing each category.

The Agency defines an application as having cleared the overall application process if a maintenance calculation has been carried out and a payment arrangement between the parent with care and the non resident parent is in place. Additionally, since not all Child Support Agency applications result in a calculation, an application is also defined as cleared if the case is closed, the parent with care is identified as claiming Good Cause or is subject to a Reduced Benefit Decision, or the application is identified as being a change of circumstances on an existing case as opposed to a new application.

The time from application clearance to first payment represents the first stage of the compliance and enforcement part of the process, as by this point the onus will now be, to a large extent, on the non-resident parent to accept financial responsibility for their children and comply with the request for maintenance.

As you will notice, many of the cases yet to clear individual stages of the process are more than a year old, a level of performance which is clearly unacceptable to our clients. In the Operational Improvement Plan announced by the Secretary of State on 9th February 2006, the Agency set itself a target of reducing the backlog of uncleared new applications to the point where, by March 2009, 80% of applications will be cleared within 12 weeks and there will be no backlog in this area.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Average time in days for new scheme new applications that have cleared various stages in the process to clear that particular stage in the process—December 2005 (scheme to date)

Application stage/intake type	*Mean*	*Median*
1st Contact to pre-application clearance		
All cases	41	12
JCP intake	32	13
Private intake	57	9
Pre-application clearance to calculation or other clearance		
All cases	125	63

Average time in days for new scheme new applications that have cleared various stages in the process to clear that particular stage in the process—December 2005 (scheme to date)

Application stage/intake type	*Mean*	*Median*
JCP intake	150	83
Private intake	87	41
Post calculation intake to post calculation clearance		
All cases	33	4
JCP intake	38	4
Private intake	28	4
Post calculation clearance to first payment		
All cases	60	30
JCP intake	55	27
Private intake	64	35

Average time in days new scheme child support applications that have yet to clear a stage in the application process have spent in that particular stage—December 2005 (scheme to date)

Application stage /intake type	*Mean*	*Median*
1st Contact to pre-application clearance		
All cases	404	367
JCP intake	615	709
Private intake	332	201
Awaiting calculation or other clearance		
All cases	371	305
JCP intake	382	311
Private intake	342	291
Awaiting post calculation clearance		
All cases	408	360
JCP intake	404	350
Private intake	414	381
Awaiting first payment		
All cases	315	214
JCP intake	309	205
Private intake	323	227

Notes:

1. Intake type refers to the parent with care's (PWC) benefit status at the time that their application is received, and not their current benefit status nor the status at the point when the case is cleared. The PWC's benefit status may change during the course of their application being processed and these figures make no provision to take account of such changes.
2. The pre-application stage is where a potential application is screened to establish whether it is valid. Pre-application clearance is where the case either progresses to the application stage, a reduced benefit decision (RBD) is applied, good cause is accepted, or the case is closed.
3. A case enters application stage where it has been accepted as valid at the pre-application stage. An application clearance occurs when a calculation is carried out, a RBD is subsequently applied, good cause is subsequently accepted or the case is subsequently closed.
4. A case enters post calculation stage where clearance at the application stage results in a calculation being carried out. Post calculation clearance is where a collection schedule is set up, an MD arrangement is set up immediately after calculation, a RBD is subsequently applied, good cause is subsequently accepted, the case is subsequently closed, or the calculation is classified as being a nil liability meaning that no further action is required.
5. The first payment stage is the time between a collection schedule being set up and a first payment being made to the PWC, or a maintenance direct arrangement being put in place. There are an additional 2,000 cases where payment was made to the PWC prior to a schedule or maintenance direct arrangement being agreed (i.e. voluntary payments), which have been excluded from the first table.
6. For those cases that do not result in a calculation, clearance of the overall application process can occur at any stage. Cases can also have cleared individual stages, but still be part way through the overall process. This means that, mathematically, neither the average time to clear the whole application process, nor the age of all uncleared cases can be obtained through summing the components presented in the table.
7. These figures do not include 84,000 cases received via the Jobcentre Plus interface that are yet to be processed, and for which we do not currently have sufficient management information for them to be included in this analysis.
8. In addition, analysis of clearance times excludes 104,000 cases received via the Jobcentre Plus interface that have been closed, or identified as a change of circumstance to an existing case (as opposed to a new application) as, again, we do not currently have sufficient management information for them to be included in this analysis.
9. Figures are rounded to the nearest day.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual running costs of the Child Support Agency and *(b)* annual saving in benefits as a consequence of Child Support Agency maintenance payments for each year from 1996 to 2005; and if he will make a statement. [21586]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual running costs of the Child Support Agency and *(b)* annual saving in benefits as a consequence of Child Support Agency maintenance payments for each year from 1996 to 2005; and if he will make a statement.

The table below shows the requested information as reported in the Annual Report and Accounts of the Child Support Agency.

Details of the annual savings in benefits are unavailable before 1999–2000, since they are not explicitly stated in the Annual Report and Accounts.

Since March 2003 Child Support applications have been dealt with under the new scheme. The new scheme introduced the Child Maintenance Premium, this is a £10 per week disregard of maintenance when calculating parent with care entitlement to Income Support. The Child Maintenance Premium was introduced to provide an incentive to parents with care to co-operate with the Agency and also to selectively target additional support to children in the poorest households. A consequence of child maintenance premium has been a reduction in the amount of maintenance collected by the Agency and paid to the Secretary of State to offset the annual cost of Income Support administered by Job Centre Plus.

£ million

	Annual agency running costs	*Annual savings in benefits*	*Total maintenance collected*
2004–05	325.60	117.40	585.41
2003–04	323.00	141.30	580.27
2002–03	294.30	146.50	572.55
2001–02	290.40	137.50	528.45
2000–01	250.00	143.00	502.55
1999–2000	260.30	148.00	460.68
1998–99	231.20	—	392.38
1997–98	225.90	—	306.16
1996–97	224.50	—	213.21
1995–96	199.30	—	134.45

Note:

Annual saving In benefit relates to maintenance collected passed to the Secretary of State rather than the parent with care.

The category of annual benefit savings covers only maintenance paid to parents with care in receipt of income support and jobseekers allowance. In recent years the proportion of the caseload that relates to non-benefit parents with care has increased. Failure to secure maintenance for this group of customers would result in some parents with care having to claim income related benefits.

Working Futures Programme

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will increase funding for the working futures programme. [47182]

Mr. Plaskitt: The working future project is testing the effect that reduced rents and increased access to employment services can have on the incentives for housing benefit claimants in temporary accommodation to find work.

The employment service element of this project is funded by the European Social Fund EQUAL programme, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, The Mayor of London, East Homes (a registered social landlord) and the London boroughs of Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Newham. DWP are also supporting this project by transferring funds to ODPM to cover the cost of the central Government grant for the duration of the pilot.

Additional funding for the employment services strand of this project is currently being considered against the eligibility criteria of the EQUAL programme.

Debt Management

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's Debt Management administration budget was for each quarter since Q2 2001, broken down by main area of expenditure. [52497]

Mr. Plaskitt: Debt Management was established within the department in April 2001. Financial records for Debt Management as a separate entity were not available prior to April 2002. Between 2001 and 2005, responsibility for staff working on benefit Debt Management was transferred to the organisation, with ten debt centres being operational from August 2004. All overpayment work from Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service was transferred to Debt Management by August 2005.

The details required are in the following tables:

£ million

Period	*April-June 2002*	*July-September 2002*	*October-December 2002*	*January-March 2003*
Staff	11.375	11.696	12.093	11.829
Non-staff	1.011	1.353	1.314	1.000
Total budget	12.386	13.049	13.407	12.829

£ million

Period	*April-June 2003*	*July-September 2003*	*October-December 2003*	*January-March 2004*
Staff	9.555	10.125	10.877	11.964
Non-staff	1.606	1.864	1.864	0.367
Total budget	11.161	11.989	12.741	12.331

£ million

Period	*April-June 2004*	*July-September 2004*	*October-December 2004*	*January-March 2005*
Staff	11.638	11.665	11.337	11.041
Non-staff	1.061	1.147	1.061	1.070
Total budget	12.699	12.812	12.398	12.111

£ million

Period	*April-June 2005*	*July-September 2005*	*October-December 2005*
Staff	13.022	14.261	14.091
Non-staff	2.394	2.421	3.876
Total budget	15.416	16.682	17.967

The increase in staff costs in 2005–06 is accounted for by the movement of work from other DWP businesses to Debt Management and the consequential staff increase.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what mechanisms are in place to reclaim overpayments of winter fuel allowance to households where more than one payment of £200 was issued. [60775]

Mr. Timms: If customers are overpaid a winter fuel payment because of official error which the Department becomes aware of, they are invited to repay it, but no further action is taken if they do not. If they are overpaid because they gave us incorrect information it is departmental policy to recover the overpayment.

Pensioner Incomes

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total income of the poorest 10 per cent. of pensioners has been in each of the last 30 years at today's prices. [61131]

Mr. Timms: Information that is available is in the following table, based on the Family Resources Survey introduced in 1994–95.

	Median income of the bottom decile of pensioners in £ per week		*Aggregate gross weekly income of the bottom decile of pensioners in £ million per week*	
	Pensioner couples	*Single pensioners*	*Pensioner couples*	*Single pensioners*
1994–95	143	77	37	34
1995–96	142	76	37	33
1996–97	145	78	37	34
1997–98	145	76	37	34
1998–99	146	77	38	35
1999–2000	149	81	39	37
2000–01	156	85	40	37
2001–02	162	83	43	37
2002–03	165	89	44	38
2003–04	172	88	47	38
2004–05	177	92	48	40

Notes:

1. Figures are in 2004–05 prices.
2. Deciles are based on the before housing costs net income distribution.
3. Figures are provided for pensioner couples and single pensioners in the bottom decile of the pensioner couples and single pensioners net income distribution respectively.
4. Pensioner couples are defined as where the head of the household is above state pension age.
5. Gross income includes income from all sources including state benefits, private pensions and any earnings.

Source:

Family Resources Survey.

Post Office Card Accounts

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of each payable benefit was transacted through *(a)* a Post Office card account, *(b)* another account at a post office and *(c)* a bank account that is not accessed at a post office in (i) the UK, (ii) Wales, (iii) Bridgend, (iv) Ogmore constituency and (v) Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough area in the last period for which figures are available. [55107]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The information is not available in the format requested. The available information is set out in the following table.

The table shows the proportion of each payable DWP benefit account that was transacted through *(a)* a Post Office card account *(b)* a bank/building society account as at 24 December. Values marked "—" represent figures below 50 and have been suppressed in line with standard practise to preserve accuracy.

We are unable to distinguish between bank accounts accessed at post offices and those accessed elsewhere.

Percentage

	Great Britain		*Wales*		*Bridgend local authority*		*Ogmore parliamentary constituency*		*Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority*	
	Post Office card account	*Bank/ building society account*	*Post Office card account*	*Bank/ building society account*	*Post Office card account*	*Bank/ building society account*	*Post Office card account*	*Bank/ building society account*	*Post Office card account*	*Bank/ building society account*
Attendance allowance	16.5	79.5	21.4	75.4	—	—	—	—	30.8	65.6
Bereavement benefit	6.0	93.2	9.3	88.9	—	—	—	—	—	—
Disability living allowance	17.7	79.3	22.4	74.7	22.3	75.2	25.4	72.1	27.7	69.2
Incapacity benefit	20.4	77.0	25.5	72.8	23.8	74.8	27.4	71.3	33.5	65.1
Carers allowance	21.0	77.8	25.4	73.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Industrial death benefit	41.1	57.0	52.0	46.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Industrial injuries death benefit	24.4	74.8	33.5	66.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Income support	28.7	67.3	35.3	61.4	32.7	64.5	37.5	59.6	44.4	53.4
Jobseekers allowance	16.4	76.4	17.7	76.5	16.1	80.1	—	—	20.0	73.4
Pensions credit	34.7	60.9	42.4	54.0	41.2	56.4	46.5	51.0	52.6	44.7
Passported incapacity benefit	14.4	80.8	20.3	73.7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Retirement pension	19.9	78.8	29.5	69.0	29.9	69.0	39.3	59.4	42.6	56.1
Severe disablement allowance	20.4	71.6	28.8	64.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Widows benefit	17.0	81.3	25.6	72.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Workman's compensation	33.7	61.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bangladesh and Pakistan (Official Holidays)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many official holidays staff at the Department's offices in *(a)* Bangladesh and *(b)* Pakistan receive per annum. [61576]

Dr. Howells: All locally engaged and UK-based staff at our missions in Bangladesh and Pakistan take 14 days of official/public holidays each year. These are taken on approved schedules which respectively take account of both British and local public holidays.

Belarus

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the situation in Belarus following the elections. [61761]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government support the assessment of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's election monitoring mission and deeply regrets the atmosphere of intimidation and suppression in which the elections were conducted. As the European Council made clear, they were fundamentally flawed.

We applaud those in Belarus who stood up for democracy through the elections and through peaceful protest afterwards. We deplore the unjustified action taken to prevent demonstrators and opposition leaders from exercising their right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, and support calls for the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners.

We remain concerned about the prospect of further action being taken against the opposition and its supporters as well as the continuing suppression of civil society. We are actively discussing with our partners the specific restrictive measures that will be taken against those responsible for the violation of international democratic standards, as well as how to intensify our support for civil society and the democratic process.

Child Soldiers

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to prevent the sale of arms to countries using child soldiers. [61758]

Dr. Howells: The UK strongly supports UN Security Council (UNSC) action to address the issue of children affected by armed conflict. UNSC resolution 1612 (July 2005) urges member states, UN entities, regional and sub-regional organisations and other parties concerned to take appropriate measures to control illicit sub-regional and cross-border activities harmful to children, including illicit trade in small arms.

Each arms export licence is assessed on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Export Licensing Criteria and other relevant international

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commitments. Consideration is given to the risk that respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the final country of destination would be contravened, as well as the risks that the export would prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing ones and the risk to regional peace, security and stability. A licence will not be issued where to do so would be inconsistent with the criteria or other relevant commitments.

China

Mr. Walter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese Government about the imprisonment and treatment of house leader Xu Shuangfu. [61787]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of the case of Xu Shuangfu and are monitoring developments. However, we have not raised his case with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China-Russia Relationship

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the relationship between China and Russia. [62148]

Ian Pearson: China and Russia continue to develop closer bilateral ties, strengthening trade links and furthering economic and energy co-operation. The two sides have also agreed how to settle border disputes and have worked together to tackle problematic issues, such as water pollution, in the region. The two countries are also moving towards greater co-operation and co-ordination on security and international issues, as shown by last year's joint military exercise.

ETA

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the ceasefire declared by ETA; and if he will make a statement. [61866]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said publicly on 22 March, the Government welcome the announcement of a permanent cease-fire by ETA, which took effect on 24 March. We hope to see the commitments made in ETA's statement delivered and hope that ETA has turned its back on terrorism for good.

All internal decisions about talks are entirely a matter for the parties on the ground. However, the Spanish government is aware of the UK's full support and that we stand ready to help in any way we can.

European Union Regulations

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been paid by the UK in fines for non-compliance with European Union regulations for each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [61802]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Article 228 of the treaty establishing the European Community enables the European Court of Justice to impose a lump sum or penalty payment on member states in certain circumstances. The court has only done so on four occasions, and never against the UK.

Gambia

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the political situation in Gambia; and if he will make a statement. [61865]

Ian Pearson: The Gambian government has confirmed that security forces thwarted an attempted coup by a group of army officers on the night of 21 March. Arrests have been made of several of those suspected. There appears to have been no fighting and no injuries were reported during the arrests. There has been no civil unrest and business has returned to normal.

The political situation in Gambia remains generally tense ahead of Presidential elections in October this year and Parliamentary elections early in 2007. Following an initiative by President Obasanjo of Nigeria and the Commonwealth Secretariat, all major parties have signed up to an electoral code of conduct. The UK will assist with electoral preparations, to help ensure they are as free and credible as possible.

Iran

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of the recent agreement between China and Iran on drilling rights in Yardavaran region of Iran. [62149]

Dr. Howells: China and Iran have significant mutual energy interests. Iran has approximately 9 per cent. of the world's oil reserves; China imports around 13 per cent. of her oil from Iran. In October 2004, China and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding on exploiting the Yadavaran oilfield in southern Iran, which has proven crude reserves of more than 30 billion barrels. According to official Chinese media, this provides for Chinese commercial involvement in developing the field on a buyback basis, and for China to purchase from Iran 10 million tons of liquefied natural gas a year over 25 years. The details of commercial arrangements between China and Iran are a matter for those two countries.

We co-operate closely with China on policy towards Iran. We welcome China's support for the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors resolutions, most recently on 4 February. We are presently discussing with China and other members of the United Nations Security Council next steps in regard to Iran's nuclear programme. We will continue to work closely with the Chinese authorities over the coming months.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the treatment of members of the Baha'i faith in Iran; and what representations he has made to the Iranian Government on this matter. [62047]

Dr. Howells: We continue to have serious concerns at Iran's treatment of religious minorities including the Baha'is. The Baha'i International Community report a marked deterioration in the situation of their co-religionists in Iran during the past 12 months. Baha'is have reportedly faced arbitrary detention, harassment, destruction of property and a hostile campaign in the media. On 20 March, the United Nations special rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, Asma Jahangir, expressed concern about an alleged instruction by Iran's Supreme Leader ordering the command headquarters of the armed forces to identify Baha'is and monitor their activities.

We have pressed the Iranian authorities to address the problems faced by the Baha'i community on many occasions, both bilaterally and through the EU. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did so when he met Iran's Foreign Minister, Manuchehr Mottaki, in September 2005. The Austrian ambassador to Tehran did so on behalf of the EU on 31 January 2006.

We have also taken action at the UN. All EU member states co-sponsored a resolution on human rights in Iran adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2005. This expressed serious concern at, inter alia,

> "the escalation and increased frequency of discrimination and other human rights violations against the Baha'i, including cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, the denial of freedom of religion or of publicly carrying out communal affairs, the disregard of property rights, the destruction of sites of religious importance, the suspension of social, educational and community-related activities and the denial of access to higher education, employment, pensions, adequate housing and other benefits."

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the planned outcomes were of the Minister of State's recent visit to Iraq; who he met during the visit; what was discussed at the meetings; and if he will make a statement. [61771]

Dr. Howells: I visited Basra on 9–11 March. During the visit I met the Governor, the Chairman of the Council, the Chief Justice, the Director General of the South Oil Company and the Chief of Police, as well as senior religious and tribal figures from the local Shia, Sunni and Christian communities. This visit worked in support of efforts to end the council's boycott of co-operation with British forces and highlighted British reconstruction efforts in the region.

Iran

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the statement from the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief on the activities of the command headquarters of the armed forces in Iran and *(b)* the letter from its chairman dated 29 October 2005 addressed to the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard and the police force. [61883]

Dr. Howells: The UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, Asma Jahangir, said in a statement on 20 March that a confidential letter from the chairman of the command headquarters of the Iranian armed forces had been brought to her attention. According to Ms Jahangir, the letter says that Iran's Supreme Leader has instructed the command headquarters to identify persons who adhere to the Baha'i faith and to monitor their activities. In the letter the command headquarters reportedly requests that the Ministry of Intelligence, the revolutionary guard and the police force collect any and all information about members of the Baha'i faith.

We share Ms Jahangir's concern at this letter, and hope that the Iranian authorities will clarify their policy towards the Baha'i community as a matter of urgency. There can be no justification for the Iranian authorities to monitor individuals simply because they adhere to a particular religion. The alleged letter adds to the evidence that discrimination against the Baha'i community in Iran is increasing. Reports suggest that Baha'is have been subjected to harassment, intimidation and arbitrary arrest and a hostile campaign in the media. Iran's Chambers of Commerce have also reportedly been ordered to create lists of all Baha'i businesses. In December 2005, a Baha'i, Mr. Dhaibullah Mahrami died in custody in unclear circumstances.

Ministers and officials have pressed the Iranian authorities on many occasions to address the discrimination suffered by the Baha'i community. We expect Iran to uphold freedom of religion and belief in accordance with its international obligations under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Middle East

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what he assesses to be the British national interest in the Middle East. [61768]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* On 28 March, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary launched "Active Diplomacy for a Changing World", the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's new White Paper which sets out nine priorities for the UK internationally, including for the Middle East. Details are available on our website www.fco.gov.uk.

Ministerial Committee on EU Strategy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date the Ministerial Committee on EU Strategy was established. [60897]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

The European Union Strategy Committee was established in June 2003. A full list of all Cabinet Committees, including their membership and terms of reference, can be found in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/secretariats/committees/

Mujahedin-e Khalq

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation that have been given protected person status under the Geneva Convention at Camp Ashraf in Iraq. [61662]

Dr. Howells: The status of 'protected persons' applies to persons meeting the relevant conditions set out in that Convention (article 4). The provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention apply to situations of international armed conflict. The armed conflict between Iraq and the Multi-National Forces has ended. We have therefore made no assessment of protected person status in Camp Ashraf.

Nepal

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the number of Maoist insurgents in Nepal. [62161]

Dr. Howells: The nature of Maoists' clandestine organisation and operations makes it very difficult to assess how many insurgents there are in Nepal. A very approximate estimate, drawn from a number of sources, including open source material, would suggest that the core cadre of active armed insurgents is about 8,000–12,000 strong. However, we estimate that there may be up to 20,000 or 30,000 other activists who may not be armed but will be heavily involved, for instance in detonating small bombs, organising logistics, carrying out extortion. In addition to this, there are probably thousands more political supporters and sympathisers.

Palestine (H5N1)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what multilateral action he is participating in to ensure that political conflict in Palestine will not hinder effective containment and eradication of the H5N1 virus; and if he will make a statement. [61869]

Dr. Howells: On 26 March, the Israeli government announced that it had culled 1.2 million birds in an effort to stop the spread of the virus. The Israeli government has said that it will work with the Palestinians to tackle the problem. It has sent preventative medicines and information on the treatment of bird flu to the Palestinians. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has set up a Ministerial committee to help with the culling of birds in the Gaza Strip and to identify farmers that will need compensation. The World Bank are funding US $2 million of compensation for farmers, to be dispersed as soon as possible. Both the Palestinians and the Israelis are putting in place measures to contain the virus. We are not participating in any multilateral action to ensure that the conflict will not hinder its containment as every effort is being made by both sides to ensure the virus does not spread. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Russia (Energy Supplies)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the International Energy Agency on Russian energy supplies. [62138]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Officials from both the Department for Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have had discussions on Russian energy supplies in the course of normal International Energy Agency (IEA) committee meetings, specifically the Non Member Country Committee (NMCC). The most recent NMCC meeting to discuss Eurasian gas was on 8–9 March 2006.

Russian energy has also been discussed at the IEA governing board. The governing board met last week, 20–24 March 2006, although Russian energy supplies were not on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning Russian oil and gas supplies to the EU. [62139]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, myself and officials continue to receive such representations as part of our ongoing discussions with key stakeholders in energy policy, particularly in the G8 and EU contexts.

The European Council on 23–24 March discussed energy security. The Presidency's conclusions note the importance of making the EU-Russia dialogue more effective, identifying as an important aim the ratification of the Energy Charter and the conclusion of its Transit Protocol.

Dialogue with Russia on energy supplies is an important element of current discussions on global energy security. The most recent discussions on this were led by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry at the G8 Energy Ministerial Meeting on 15–16 March.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme joined the scheme *(a)* before the age of (i) 20, (ii) 25, (iii) 30, (iv) 35, (v) 40 and (vi) 45 and *(b)* when they were over 45 years. [61399]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the employer contribution rate to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme are; what assumed rate of return underlies this contribution rate; and what the contribution rate would be if the assumed rate of return were in line with current redemption yields on index-linked gilts. [61400]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Employer contribution rates in respect of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme are assessed for each of four ranges of pay levels. A separate rate is payable in respect of a group of prison officers who have certain reserved rights. The rates for the years 2005–06 are shown in the table.

Salary band	*Rate of employer contribution (percentage)*
£18,000 and under	16.2
£18,001 to £37,000	18.6
£37,001 to £63,500	22.3
£63,501 and over	24.6
Prison officers with reserved rights	25.6

Contribution rates are based on an assumed discount rate (rate of return) of 3.5 per cent. per annum in excess of price increases.

Information on the contribution rates that would apply if the assumed rate of return was in line with the current redemption yield on index-linked gilts can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax (Official Residences)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library a copy of the revised guidance from the Cabinet Secretary to Ministers on payment of council tax on official residences. [62215]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 12 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 782W, which made clear that for the future, arrangements have been put in place to ensure that Ministers who are allocated official residences are given clear guidance on dealing with their council tax liability. This guidance will be activated when there is a change of occupancy in any of the official residences.

Departmental Furniture

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by the Cabinet Office on acquiring furniture in each year since 1997. [60876]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The available information on the cost of furniture for the Cabinet Office are shown in the table. Figures incorporate the central London estate, National School for Government in Sunningdale, Emergency Planning College in York and the Office of Public Service Information in Norwich. Figures prior to 2002–03 are not available.

	£
2002–03	96,849
2003–04	316,076
2004–05	249,710

Ministerial Role

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister without Portfolio what proportion of his car costs are met by the Labour Party. [60877]

Minister without Portfolio: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2106W.

Costs for transport provided to me in my role as Party Chairman are a matter for the Labour Party.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister without Portfolio what role he plays as an interface between the Government and the Labour Party in respect of party funding issues. [60878]

Minister without Portfolio: The Department of Constitutional Affairs is responsible for Government Policy on Party Funding issues.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister without Portfolio what office space is made available to him; where it is located; and what support he is provided with in terms of officials allocated to him. [60879]

Minister without Portfolio: As a Government Minister I have use of an office located within the Cabinet Office. I am supported by a small Private Office. Details of special advisers are as in the statement my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister made to Parliament on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 158WS.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister without Portfolio pursuant to his answer of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2106W, on his official car, for what reason he has not quantified the mileage covered by his car in February 2006. [60913]

Minister without Portfolio: This information is not held by my office.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Andre Massamba

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his Department's handling of Andre Massamba's application for asylum. [61567]

Mr. McNulty: The Director General for the Immigration Nationality Directorate wrote to my hon. Friend on 24 March 2006.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many anti-social behaviour orders were issued by *(a)* South Wales Police, *(b)* Dyfed Powys Police, *(c)* Gwent Police and *(d)* North Wales Police in 2004–05. [60814]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are issued by the courts. ASBOs, issued on application, may be applied for by the police or other relevant authorities. The available information is given in the following table.

Number of antisocial behaviour orders issued at all courts, as notified to the Home Office, by type of applicant or following conviction, by period and criminal justice system area in Wales

	ASBOs issued on application by type of applicant						
Area	Police	British Transport Police	Local Government Authority	Residential Social Landlord	Sub-total	ASBOs issued following conviction	Total
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005							
Dyfed Powys	1	—	—	—	1	3	4
Gwent	—	—	16	—	16	7	23
North Wales	2	—	1	—	3	37	40
South Wales	13	1	5	1	20	31	51
Total	16	1	22	1	40	78	118
1 April 2005 to 30 June 2005 (latest available)							
Dyfed Powys	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Gwent	—	—	8	—	8	4	12
North Wales	3	—	—	—	3	28	31
South Wales	3	—	—	—	3	10	13
Total	6	—	8	—	14	44	58

Asylum/Immigration

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions of employers under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 have taken place in each of the last five years. [61311]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the number of employers proceeded against and found guilty under Section eight of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 in the last five years is available in the Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2004 Command Paper. Published statistics on immigration and asylum, including the Command Paper, are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1960W, on asylum/immigration, what estimate was made of the cost of providing the information. [61252]

Mr. McNulty: All central Government Departments apply a limit of £600 or three days work. Providing the information you requested would require staff to identify, recall and examine all deportation cases conceded over the past five years. The IND has estimated that this would exceed this figure.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood of 11 January 2006 regarding Nasir Razzaq (Home Office Reference IMM/E071S, date of birth 15 March 1974). [59443]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 24 March 2006.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ask the Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate to report to him on when she plans to reply to the letter of 22 December from the hon. Member for Sunderland, South on behalf of Ashraf Suleiman (HO reference 5887070). [59744]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my hon. Friend on 20 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 6 December 2005 (acknowledgement reference B29113/5) on behalf of Mrs. Anarine Atherton (née Porter), Home Office reference P1035420/2. [59906]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 20 March 2006.

Crime Prevention

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the oral answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1134, on crime prevention, if he will amend the guidance issued on the use of cautions. [59397]

Fiona Mactaggart: One of the main aims of the caution, as stated in the Cautioning of Adult Offenders Circular 30/2005 issued by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform is to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. It is not possible to set out definitive rules on the circumstances in which cautions are appropriate, because their use involves the exercise of discretion by the police who have to take into account a number of considerations in each case. These considerations include whether a caution is appropriate to the offence and the offender and whether it is likely to be effective in the circumstances.

The circular advises that both national and any locally held records must be checked before a caution is given. If the suspect has previously received a caution, then a further caution should not normally be considered. However, if there has been a sufficient lapse of time to suggest that a previous caution has had a significant deterrent effect (two years or more), then a caution can be used. If evidence of repeat cautioning, of the kind referred to in the hon. Gentleman's question, suggests this is an issue in a number of other areas, we will consider revisiting the guidance on this point.

Dispersal Orders

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dispersal orders were issued by Peterborough youth court in the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [60870]

Hazel Blears: Authorisations under Section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, commonly known as dispersal orders, are made by a Superintendent with the agreement of the local authority. The courts are not involved in the authorisation procedure. We do not hold information centrally on the number of authorisations in the Peterborough area.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the responsibilities are of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner with regards to terrorism. [60432]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner is responsible for the overall strategic direction and efficiency of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) across the range of the services that it delivers, including counter terrorism.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many motoring offences were recorded in each year between 1999 and 2004 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by sex. [61686]

Hazel Blears: Available information on the number of motoring offences dealt with by official police action in England and Wales from 1999 to 2003 (latest available) is given in the table. 2004 data will be available at the end of March 2006.

Motoring offences dealt with by official police action[1] *England and Wales 1999–2003*

	Total (Thousands of offences)
1999	5,558.1
2000	5,296.9
2001	5,133.8
2002	5,274.6
2003	6,109.8

[1] Consists of court proceedings, written warnings, fixed penalties and vehicle defect rectification scheme notices complied with.

Note:

Information by gender is available at court proceedings level only.

Police

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that the existing North Wales police force area will not have fewer resources following the establishment of a single police force for Wales. [51025]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The new strategic police authority will need to take the particular needs of North Wales into account in its resource planning. It will be for the authority to ensure that it meets the policing needs in all of its constituent areas. The roll-out of neighbourhood policing teams to every area of England and Wales underpins the restructuring programme, and strategic forces will help to safeguard local policing by reducing the need to abstract officers from neighbourhood policing teams. Therefore people will see a significant improvement in their local police service, whatever the eventual overall structure.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the extent to which the burden of administration affecting police activity has been minimised; whether he *(a)* has new proposals to reduce the burden and *(b)* is considering the merits of a further review; and if he will make a statement. [61898]

Hazel Blears: We have made good progress in reducing the bureaucratic burdens on police officers by cutting nearly 9,000 unnecessary forms; civilianising posts; rolling out the penalty notice for disorder scheme; and ensuring that forces have the best scientific and technological support like video identity parades and electronic fingerprinting.

The National Bureaucracy Adviser, an assistant chief constable with over 20 years' experience, continues to provide practical experience to forces in the implementation of their work on reducing bureaucracy. This includes visiting forces to spread good practice; challenge, where necessary, existing practices; and drive force-led reductions in bureaucracy. This will be particularly important in the context of creating strategic forces.

The Frontline Policing Measure for 2004–05 indicated that officers in England and Wales spent 64.1 per cent. of their time on frontline duties. Police authorities have set local improvement targets which should deliver substantial gains by 2008.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the business case documents submitted to him by the Thames Valley police authority in response to his request for proposals on the reconfiguration of police force areas. [42568]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 16 January 2006]:* There are no plans to place the business case documents in the Library. However anyone wishing to access the documents should contact Thames Valley police authority, who as the authors can release these documents if they wish to do so.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that the resources in a merged Welsh police force will be distributed fairly throughout Wales. [51022]

Hazel Blears: The new strategic police authority will need to take the needs of the whole of Wales into account in its resource planning. It will be for the authority to ensure that it meets the policing needs in all of its constituent areas. The roll-out of neighbourhood policing teams to every area of England and Wales underpins the restructuring programme, and strategic forces will help to safeguard local policing by reducing the need to abstract officers from neighbourhood policing teams. Therefore people will see a significant improvement in their local police service, whatever the eventual overall structure.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to meet the Welsh police authorities to discuss the proposed restructuring of Welsh police authorities; and if he will make a statement. [55147]

Hazel Blears: My right hon. Friend The Home Secretary and I met with the Welsh Police Authority Chairs and Chief Constables on 6 February to discuss the way forward for Wales following the assessment of the options by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Since then, the Home Office central team have been working closely with the Police Authorities and Chief Constables to develop the implementation plan for the move to an all-Wales strategic police force.

The creation of an all-Wales force is subject to our consideration of any objections received in response to the notice we gave on 3 March of our intention to merge the four police areas in Wales and to Parliament's approval of the necessary amalgamation order.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Wales since the four Welsh police authorities did not meet the consultation deadline for the proposed restructuring of the police force in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [55148]

Hazel Blears: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is in close contact with the Secretary of State for Wales on the subject of police force restructuring in Wales, and has regular bi-lateral meetings with him. The four Welsh police authorities did submit business cases by the December deadline, although they were unable at that point to indicate a preferred option.

The Home Secretary has given formal notice of his intention to amalgamate the four Welsh police force areas to the affected police authorities, local authorities and chief constables and to the Welsh Assembly Government. They have until 2 July to submit any objections to the proposal. Without prejudice to our consideration of any objections received and Parliament's consideration of the necessary amalgamation order, we will be working closely with the police authorities and chief constables on an implementation plan over the coming weeks.

Prison Service (Retirement)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to change the Prison Service retirement age; and if he will make a statement. [61502]

Fiona Mactaggart: The public sector Prison Service introduced greater flexibility into its age retirement policy for all administrative staff in December 2005 so that they can if they wish work beyond 60 to 65. Industrial and officer support grades are already allowed to work until 65. Other grades, including prison officers, operational managers and nurses, are prevented from routinely working beyond 60. However, these policies are under review. None of these changes would affect pension entitlements.

Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of tuberculosis have occurred at each prison in each of the last five years; what steps he is taking to reduce the incidence of tuberculosis in prisons; and if he will make a statement. [59199]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not routinely available from prison establishments on the number of prisoners diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis (TB). However as TB is a notifiable disease, each new case is reported to the local consultant in communicable disease control (CCDC).

The Prison Service's performance standard, 'Health Services for Prisoners' (May 2004) requires every prison establishment to have in place effective arrangements for the prevention, control and management of communicable diseases, including tuberculosis. These must include arrangements for the notification of all incidents of notifiable disease, such as TB to the local Health Protection Agency's consultant in communicable disease control (CCDC) and an action plan in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease. The diagnosis, care, treatment and management and contact tracing of prisoners with tuberculosis is undertaken in consultation with local national health service specialists in accordance with the British Thoracic Society guidelines for the management of TB. Prisons are identified as a specific health care environment in the recently published National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) document 'Tuberculosis. Clinical diagnosis and management of tuberculosis and measures for its prevention and control.'

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he is taking to reduce the number of suicides among remand inmates; [59315]

(2) what action he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is taking to reduce the incidence of suicide in prison. [61504]

Fiona Mactaggart: Concerning action that is been taken I refer the hon. Member to the prisoner suicide prevention strategy referred to in my answer of 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2313–14W, regarding prisoners who self-harm. This built upon the strategy developed since 2001 that included: Over £26 million invested in safer custody arrangements, through the Safer Local Prisons Programme. 2,650 'Listeners' (Samaritan-trained prisoner peer supporters) recruited across the estate. Suicide Prevention Coordinators (or their equivalents) placed in all prisons to provide a focal point for and increase the profile of suicide prevention.

The strategy is aimed at protecting all prisoners, though the Government recognises that prisoners are particularly at risk of self-harm and suicide in their early period in custody, whether sentenced or on remand. Prisoners in early custody are therefore subject to a number of policies and practices designed to enhance their safety. These include health screening upon arrival that includes an assessment of risk of suicide or self-harm, the use of peer supporters ('Insiders') to offer information and support to new prisoners, and First Night and Induction procedures.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2227W, on prison education, what assessment he has made of the capital requirements in each prison for the planned increase in educational enrolments; what timetable he envisages for delivery; and what interim measures he will make available to each prison. [62140]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department for Education and Skills will have invested some £25.5 million in capital equipment to support learning and skills in prisons between financial years 2002–03 and 2005–06. As with all areas of spend on offender learning and skills, consideration of future capital requirements will be taken forward as part of the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of inmates at each prison have been enrolled in formal education activities in each year since 1997. [62144]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with providers of education in prison on increasing the *(a)* quality and *(b)* quantity of education. [62151]

Fiona Mactaggart: Officials in the Learning and Skills Council have frequent discussions with providers of learning and skills for offenders in custody and in the community in the three regions where the LSC has already taken responsibility for planning and funding the delivery arrangements. In the remaining regions, detailed discussions are currently underway with prospective providers. Each of those discussions covers matters of quality and quantity.

As part of the consultation on the Green Paper "Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment" (December 2005), Ministers and officials in the Department for Education and Skills have had a number of discussions with providers. Those too have touched on matters of quality and quantity in future arrangements.

Shingaradazo Mudgyima

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to deport Shingaradazo Mudgyima, alias Sheena Daniels. [60151]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Visas

Dr. Blackman-Woods: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being put in place to ensure that the number of international students coming to the UK will not be reduced by the abolition of the appeal system for student visas in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill. [60745]

Mr. McNulty: I recognise the important economic and cultural contribution that international students make to the United Kingdom. We welcome genuine students and do not want to dissuade them from coming to the country. There is no evidence that potential students are attracted to apply for a course in a particular country because they are eligible for a right of appeal should they be refused entry clearance. We do not, therefore, believe that the removal of appeal rights will be a disincentive to student applications.

There is no right of appeal against refusal of entry clearance in many other countries, for instance Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Under the new points based system, students will be granted entry clearance on the basis of transparent and objective criteria. At the moment entry clearance officers are required to make subjective judgements in accordance with the immigration rules. For example, the officer must assess an applicant's intention and ability to study.

The points based system will abolish this requirement, and an offer from an approved institution will act as a proxy for intention and ability. This will be made possible by the Home Office and education institutions working in partnership to share the responsibility of ensuring that genuine students can come to the country while preventing abuse of the immigration system.

Appeal rights will be removed simultaneously with the introduction of the points based system. We plan to implement the new system in phases. This will mean, for example, that as tier four is implemented, and so appeal rights for students will be removed. The systemic improvements brought by the points based system will facilitate the removal of appeal rights.

In lieu of a full right of appeal, people will be able to apply for administrative review of the refusal of entry clearance. If a person is refused, the entry clearance officer's notice will set out precisely why the decision has been made, referring back to the criteria for which points are awarded. When applying for administrative review the applicant must set out which aspect of the decision, as justified in the refusal letter, was incorrect. Administrative review will provide applicants with a swift and effective remedy where a factual error has been made.

We are taking additional steps to ensure that there is a high quality of entry clearance decisions. The role of the Independent Monitor will be enhanced, for example, to provide greater oversight of the operation. More resources are also being invested in training entry clearance officers and their managers, and a network of regional managers has recently been recruited.

An amendment was also made to the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill at Lords third reading stage. This will require a report to be laid before

Parliament on the entry clearance operation and administrative review within three years of the removal of appeal rights.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ambulance Service (Ards Peninsula)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* ambulances and *(b)* emergency ambulances cover the Ards Peninsula (i) on weekdays, (ii) at weekends, (A) during the day and (B) overnight. [62106]

Mr. Woodward: Cover for the Ards Peninsula is provided by A and E ambulances from Newtownards and Bangor ambulance stations. Shift patterns for these stations are shown in the following table. The figures refer to the number of ambulance crews available during each shift. There is no difference between "ambulances" and "emergency ambulances".

Shift Patterns	*Monday*	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*	*Saturday*	*Sunday*
Ards							
08:00–20:00	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
10:30–21:00	1	1	1	1	1	—	—
08:00–15:30	1	1	1	1	1	—	—
20:00–08:00	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
20:00–07:00	—	—	1	—	—	1	1
Bangor							
08:00–20:00	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
20:00–08:00	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

In addition, one rapid response vehicle is deployed in the area every day from 8 am to 8 pm.

While cover is generally provided from the Newtownards and Bangor stations, the Northern Ireland ambulance service will send the nearest available ambulance to an emergency incident if the local vehicles are already deployed.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average response time for *(a)* ambulances and *(b)* emergency ambulances to calls along the Ards Peninsula was in the last period for which figures are available. [62107]

Mr. Woodward: In February 2006, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service responded to 31 calls in the Ards Peninsula area, with an average response time of 21 minutes and 4 seconds. There is no difference between "ambulances" and "emergency ambulances".

Civil Service

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many *(a)* men, *(b)* women, *(c)* Catholics and *(d)* Protestants are employed by the Northern Ireland civil service at (i) grade 7, (ii) deputy principal grade and (iii) staff officer grade; [36980]

(2) when he will provide a substantive answer to Question 36980 tabled by the hon. Member for Foyle on 7 December 2005 on the Northern Ireland civil service. [61613]

Angela E. Smith: I am sorry for the delay in replying. This was due to a clerical error.

The information requested is set out in the following tables.

Table 1: NICS non-industrial at grade 6/7, deputy principal (DP) and staff officer (SO) grade levels by gender at 1 January 2006

Grade level	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Grade 6/7	1,039	494	1,533
DP	1,510	830	2,340
SO	2,031	1,313	3,344

Table 2: NICS non-industrial at grade 6/7, DP and SO grade levels by community background at 1 January 2006

Grade level	*Protestant*	*Catholic*	*Total*
Grade 6/7	855	557	1,412
DP	1,352	914	2,266
SO	1,885	1,359	3,244

Note:

Totals do not match because Table 2 does not include staff whose community background is not determined.

East-West Relations

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on improving East-West relations between the peoples of the United Kingdom, Irish Republic, Channel Islands and Isle of Man since 14 October 2002. [61618]

Angela E. Smith: Since 14 October 2002 Northern Ireland has continued to develop and improve East-West relations by contributing fully to the work of the British Irish Council. This has resulted in valuable co-operation and sharing of information between the BIC member administrations across each of the sectoral areas: the misuse of drugs, the environment, social inclusion, telemedicine, tourism, transport, the knowledge economy and minority languages.

Education (Statementing)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children were statemented in each Education and Library Board area in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [61622]

Angela E. Smith: The numbers of statemented children in schools in each of the last three years were as follows:

Education and Library Board area	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Belfast	1,721	1,673	1,640
Western	1,796	1,915	2,002
North Eastern	2,109	2,256	2,360
South Eastern	3,034	3,204	3,281
Southern	2,325	2,474	2,671
Total	10,985	11,522	11,954

GP Provision (Millisle)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the general practice provision is in Millisle. [62108]

Mr. Woodward: A Donaghadee b[illegible]d practice provides a branch surgery in Millisle every Thursday morning. Residents of Millisle can register with nearby GP practices located in Donaghadee and Ballywalter.

Hip Replacements

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time a person requiring a hip replacement waited *(a)* from referral by GP for an initial consultation and *(b)* from referral by consultant following out-patient assessment until the procedure was performed in each health board in the latest period for which figures are available. [62093]

Mr. Woodward: Waiting list information is collected by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the arithmetic mean (average) length of time waiting. It is however possible to identify the median or mid-point waiting time band.

The median waiting time bands for patients waiting for their first out-patient appointment with a consultant following referral (including GP referral) to the trauma and orthopaedics (T and O) specialty (including those requiring hip replacements) at 31 December 2005 is shown in the following table. Included in the table are the median waiting time bands for patients waiting for a hip replacement operation following referral by consultant at 31 December 2005. Information is broken down by health board of residence.

	Median waiting time band at 31 December 2005	
Health board of residence	*(a) Patients waiting for an initial consultation in the T and O specialty following referral (months)*	*(b) Patients waiting for a hip replacement operation following consultant referral (months)*
Eastern	12–14	Less than 6
Northern	6–8	Less than 6
Southern	6–8	Less than 6
Western	3–5	Less than 6

Source:

Departmental Information Return CHS Parts 1 and 2 (Part *(a)*) and Altnagelvin Group and Green Park Healthcare Trusts (Part *(b)*).

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which hospitals are undertaking hip replacement procedures in Northern Ireland. [62094]

Mr. Woodward: Currently, Musgrave Park hospital and Altnagelvin Area hospital are the only hospitals in Northern Ireland that routinely admit elective (planned) patients for hip replacement surgery. Some emergency hip replacement operations are undertaken at the Royal Victoria and Ulster hospital hospitals and, in a small number of cases, at the Causeway, Whiteabbey, Mid Ulster, Craigavon Area, Daisy Hill and Erne hospitals.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hip replacement operations were completed in each of the last five years in each *(a)* hospital and *(b)* health board in Northern Ireland. [62095]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The following table shows the number of admissions[1] to hospitals in Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years, where a hip replacement was carried out as the primary procedure.

Hospital	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Musgrave Park	1,314	1,059	1,124	1,058	1,151
Ulster	128	171	106	156	170
RVH	469	520	485	438	434
Lagan Valley	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Coleraine	<5	<5	<5	<5	21
Causeway	<5	12	25	26	<5
Whiteabbey	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Mid Ulster	<5	5	<5	5	6
Antrim	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Craigavon Area	11	<5	<5	<5	<5
Daisy Hill	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Altnagelvin	453	395	346	284	260
Erne	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5

(b) The following table shows the number of admissions[1] to hospitals in each Health Board in Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years, where a hip replacement was carried out as the primary procedure.

Health Board[2]	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Eastern	1,911	1,750	1,715	1,652	1,755
Northern	0	17	25	31	27
Southern	11	<5	<5	<5	<5
Western	453	395	346	284	260

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation to admissions. It is possible that any individual could be admitted to hospital more than once in any year and will thus be counted more than once as an admission.

[2] Health Board refers to the Health Board of the Trust providing the treatment.

Cell sizes less than five have been masked to minimize confidentiality risks.

Source:

Hospital Inpatient System

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are waiting for hip replacements in Northern Ireland in each *(a)* health board and *(b)* hospital in Northern Ireland, broken down by sex. [62096]

Mr. Woodward: The number of patients waiting for a hip replacement by health board of residence for Altnagelvin and Musgrave Park hospitals at 31 December 2005 is shown in the following table:

	Number waiting for hip replacement at 31 December 2005	
Health board of residence	*Altnagelvin hospital*	*Musgrave Park hospital*
Eastern	0	446
Northern	57	272
Southern	5	184
Western	188	58
Northern Ireland	250	960

Note:

As figures were provided in aggregate form, it was not possible to break down by gender.

Source:

Altnagelvin Group and Green Park Healthcare HSS Trusts.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest waiting time for (i) initial orthopaedic outpatient assessment and (ii) hip replacement was in each health trust in the Province in the last period for which figures are available. [62105]

Mr. Woodward: Waiting list information is collected by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the arithmetic mean (average) and longest time waiting. It is however possible to identify the median or mid point and longest waiting time band.

The median and longest waiting time band along with the number of patients in the longest time band for (i) initial out-patient assessment in the Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) specialty and (ii) hip replacement, for each applicable Health Trust for those patients waiting at 31 December 2005 is shown in the following table.

	(i) Initial out-patient T&O assessment at 31 December 2005		*(ii) Hip replacement at 31 December 2005*	
HSS Trust	*Median waiting time band*	*Longest waiting time band*	*Median waiting time band*	*Longest waiting time band*
Green Park	6–8 months	10.1 per cent. of patients waiting 24 + months	3–5 months	1.7 per cent. of patients waiting 12–14 months
Altnagelvin	3–5 months	0.7 per cent. of patients waiting 24 + months	Less than 6 months	7.6 per cent. of patients waiting 12–17 months
Royal Group	15–17 months	30.9 per cent. of patients waiting 24 + months	n/a	n/a
Ulster Community and Hospitals	12–14 months	22.6 per cent. of patients waiting 24 + months	n/a	n/a
Down Lisburn	0–2 months	12.2 per cent. of patients waiting 3–5 months	n/a	n/a
Mater	6–8 months	0.5 per cent. of patients waiting 21–23 months	n/a	n/a

Sources:

Departmental Information Return CH3 Parts 1 and 2 (part i) and Altnagelvin Group and Green Park Healthcare HSS Trusts (part ii)

NIPPA (Funding)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding each health trust in Northern Ireland is providing for NIPPA early years pre-school groups in 2005–06. [62103]

Mr. Woodward: The following table sets out the amount of funding provided by each health and social services trust in 2005–06 to the NIPPA early years pre-school groups:

Trust	*Amount provided (£)*
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	5,280
Causeway HSS Trust	9,692
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	31,745
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	56,670
Foyle Community HSS Trust	40,035
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	61,348
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	28,035
North and West Belfast Community HSS Trust	108,816
South and East Belfast Community HSS Trust	130,000
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	23,300
Ulster Hospitals and Community HSS Trust	23,555

Post-Primary Curriculum

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will commission the National Foundation for Educational Research to evaluate the papers produced by Dr. Hugh Morrison on alternative post-primary admissions and curriculum arrangements for Northern Ireland. [62062]

Angela E. Smith: There are no plans to commission any evaluation by the National Foundation for Educational Research. Dr. Morrison's papers are being considered by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and I expect to receive advice from the Council shortly.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the contract awarded to the National Foundation for Educational Research to evaluate the proposed new post-primary curriculum and assessment arrangements for Northern Ireland was subject to competitive tender. [62063]

Angela E. Smith: No contract has been awarded to evaluate the proposed new post-primary curriculum and assessment arrangements for Northern Ireland. The National Foundation for Educational Research was awarded the contract to evaluate the implementation plans for the proposed curriculum and assessment arrangements, covering *all Key Stages*. This contract was subject to competitive tender.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of whether *(a)* the draft Education (Northern Ireland) Order and *(b)* the proposed new post-primary curriculum satisfied the guidelines set out in A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister; and if he will make a statement. [62064]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education has regard to the Practical Guide to Policy Making and I am satisfied that all the necessary and appropriate steps have been taken in relation to the preparation of the proposal for a draft Education (NI) Order 2006 and the revised curriculum for the primary and post- primary phases.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he took to consult parents on the proposed post-primary curriculum for Northern Ireland. [62065]

Angela E. Smith: CCEA undertook extensive consultation on its key stage 3 proposals in autumn 2003. The consultation took a wide variety of forms, including focus group meetings and briefings with key stakeholders, including parents. The consultation was widely publicised in the media and consultation materials were made available in a wide range of formats to facilitate responses. The consultation was independently evaluated by the Consultation Institute and was described as 'excellent'.

In addition, the Department consulted key stakeholders, including parents, on the draft Education Order, which includes provision for the revised post-primary curriculum. The consultation was widely publicised and responses were invited online or in writing. Officials are analysing the responses and I will publish my response in due course.

University Education

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students normally resident in Northern Ireland are estimated to have gone to full-time university education in Great Britain in each of the last 10 years. [62102]

Angela E. Smith: The information is in the following table.

NI domiciled full-time first year enrolments at English, Scottish and Welsh Higher Education institutions 1995–96 to 2004–05

Academic year	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total
1995–96	4,001	759	4,760
1996–97	4,101	802	4,903
1997–98	4,256	877	5,133
1998–99	4,092	792	4,884
1999–2000	3,719	810	4,529
2000–01	3,500	853	4,353
2001–02	3,461	866	4,327
2002–03	3,677	960	4,637
2003–04	3,752	1,050	4,802
2004–05	3,915	995	4,910

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency

Waiting Lists

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are awaiting an initial out-patient assessment with a consultant following a referral by their general practitioner in Northern Ireland. [62092]

Mr. Woodward: At 31 December 2005, there were 180,238 patients waiting for an initial out-patient assessment with a consultant. Of which, 146,952 (81.5 per cent.) had been referred by their general practitioner (this figure does not include GP referrals to Homefirst and Foyle health and social services trusts).

WALES

Capita Group

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much business his Department has placed with *(a)* Capita Group plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries in each of the last five years; what the total value is of outstanding contracts placed with Capita Group plc and its subsidiaries by his Department; for which current tenders issued by his Department (i) Capita Group plc and (ii) its subsidiaries have been invited to bid; and whether (A) Capita Group plc and (B) its subsidiaries have seconded staff (1) temporarily and (2) on a longer-term basis to his Department. [61060]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office has no contracts with Capita or its subsidiaries.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many tenders *(a)* Capita plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries has submitted to his Department in each of the last three years; and how many tenders were successful. [61457]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office has received no tenders from Capita or its subsidiaries.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many contracts his Department holds with *(a)* Capita plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries which have a potential duration of five years or more; [61458]

(2) what the value of contracts held by his Department with *(a)* Capita plc and *(b)* its subsidiaries was in the last three financial years. [61456]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office has no contracts with Capita or its subsidiaries.

Child Support Agency

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions about the performance of the Child Support Agency in Wales. [59645]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues about the performance of their relative Departments in Wales.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson), announced on 9 February a redesign of child support that would consider the fundamental policy and delivery arrangements. Sir David Henshaw, who is carrying out the redesign, is scheduled to report to the Secretary of State by the summer recess. The Government will then respond to Sir David's findings.

This redesign is in addition to the Child Support Agency's operational improvement plan. This sets out how the Agency will radically overhaul its operations to provide a significantly improved level of client service and achieve an overall improvement in the amount of money collected for children in Wales and other parts of the UK.

Council Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to his answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1640W, on council tax, how many cameras the Valuation Office Agency purchased for use in the council tax revaluation in Wales. [62235]

Mr. Hain: No cameras were bought specifically by the Valuation Office Agency for use in the council tax revaluation in Wales. All cameras purchased by the Agency are used across all areas of its business.

Energy and Transport Policy

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what procedures he has put in place to ensure those aspects of energy and transport policy not devolved to the Welsh Assembly are delivered in a way compatible with the energy and transport strategies of the Welsh Assembly. [60621]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues and Welsh Assembly Government Ministers about both devolved and non-devolved matters affecting Wales.

Concordats are also in place between the Assembly and the Department for Transport and the Department of Trade and Industry. These set out a framework for working relationships and communications between the parties.

Energy/Water Efficiency

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of the Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the 2004–05 financial year. [58756]

Mr. Hain: None. The Wales Office is taking steps to reduce both energy and water consumption in partnership with the Carbon Trust, and Thames Water.

Flood Defences (Welsh Coast)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what funding has been allocated in flood defence works by each local authority along the South Wales coast between Newport and Llanelli in each year between 1995 and 2005. [59993]

Mr. Hain: Capital expenditure since the existing structure of local authorities was established in 1996, is set out in the following tables.

Land drainage and flood prevention

£000

Local authority	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Carmarthenshire	31	—	—	71	120	50	273	671	—
Swansea	80	139	242	177	110	44	31	21	9
Neath Port Talbot	284	131	96	87	237	219	217	380	78
Bridgend	55	94	214	263	446	195	137	114	511
Vale of Glamorgan	—	—	3	—	—	—	18	1	12
Cardiff	—	—	—	—	—	—	433	107	65
Newport	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,145

Coast protection

£000

Local authority	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Carmarthenshire	567	510	—	31	130	25	27	—	—
Swansea	27	280	269	19	7	206	27	155	91

Coast protection

£000

Local authority	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Neath Port Talbot	—	2,594	38	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bridgend	6	1	66	50	57	115	42	51	33
Vale of Glamorgan	4	—	—	—	—	34	32	—	49
Cardiff	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newport	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59279]

Mr. Hain: There is no single definition of a small firm with terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (small and medium sized enterprise) used interchangeably. However, two of the most common definitions are those provided by the European Commission and the Companies Act 1985. These definitions can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm and http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/audit.htm.

Wales Office has no policy or operational responsibility for support schemes to businesses. In Wales, these are administered by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Assembly Government use the definition agreed by the European Commission.

Young People

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what funds he plans to make available in Wales *(a)* to offer young people evening sports and *(b)* to tackle antisocial behaviour. [61711]

Mr. Hain: The United Kingdom Parliament votes the necessary provision for Wales to the Secretary of State; he makes payments to the devolved administrations. The block grants (or assigned budgets) are contained within the devolved administrations' Departmental Expenditure Limits. Changes to these budgets are generally determined by the Barnett formula. The allocation of public expenditure between the services under the control of the devolved Administrations is for the devolved Administrations to determine.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Concessionary Travel

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the extent to which funding provided through the revenue support grant to Stockport metropolitan borough council to provide free off-peak bus travel for older and disabled people is sufficient to cover its contribution to the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority to implement the scheme. [60333]

Mr. Woolas: Government support for concessionary fares is funded via the revenue support grant settlement. Revenue support grant is an unhypothecated block grant. This means that authorities are able to spend the grant on any service. It is not therefore possible to say how much grant an authority received for a particular service.

Cost of Fire Sub-group

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he intends to reconvene the cost of fire sub-group to re-examine the cost of fire in England. [61059]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The cost of fire sub-group was an ad hoc working group. The need for, and timing of, any future meetings of such a group will be considered when appropriate.

English Cities

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish an errata slip for the publication English Cities to acknowledge the existence of the boroughs of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell. [61309]

Mr. Woolas: The existence of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell is already acknowledged in the State of the English Cities Report. Appendix 2 to Volume 2 of the report lists all of the local authority districts that comprise each of the 56 Primary Urban Areas (PUAs) used for analytical purposes. The four boroughs referred to, plus Solihull and Birmingham, are all shown as included in the Birmingham PUA.

PUAs were used as a tool for analyses rather than local authority areas in order to better reflect the boundaries of physically built-up areas. Section 2.3.5 of the main Report explains that PUAs are not co-terminous with local authority boundaries, although the names are sometimes the same.

The detailed data from the State of the English Cities report will be publicly accessible on the ODPM website at a range of spatial scales, including local authority and neighbourhood levels, from early summer 2006. It will then be possible for individual local authorities to carry out in-depth analyses for their own areas.

Fire and Rescue Authorities

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many contacts have been received since 1997 by the fire and rescue authorities in England from employers in compliance with their duties under Regulation 4(2)*(b)* of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, as amended. [61055]

Jim Fitzpatrick: This information is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many enforcement notices have been issued by the fire and rescue services in England in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, as amended, in each year since 1997. [61056]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of Enforcement Notices served since 1998–99 by fire and rescue services in England is presented in the following table. Information prior to 1998–99 is not held centrally.

Enforcement Notices served under Section 13(1) of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997: England

	Number
1998–99	82
1999–2000	175
2000–01	661
2001–02	1,036
2002–03	1,079
2003–04	1,364
2004–05 (provisional)	984

Source:
ODPM Performance and Management Information database

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department has offered to the business community and their associations on the move to integrated risk management plans by fire and rescue services; and what assessment his Department has made of the impact on insurance premiums payable. [61057]

Jim Fitzpatrick: No formal guidance has been offered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the business community and their associations on the move to integrated risk management plans (IRMP) and no assessment has been made on the impact of insurance premiums payable. However, the business community will be consulted by fire and rescue authorities as required under any IRMP, and advice and clarification on any proposal provided where requested.

While it is the responsibility of every business to ensure good fire safety and business continuity plans are in place, we also recognise the need to remain fully engaged with the business community and their associations on IRMPs. Therefore, the business community are active participants in the Business and Community Safety Forum and we have invited a number of key representatives, including the Fire Protection Association and the CBI, to participate in an IRMP steering group. Discussions on the need for further IRMP guidance and what form that guidance should take will be had within that group and recommendations brought before Ministers if appropriate.

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information is required to be supplied to his Department by the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 (as amended) and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended). [61892]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Fire and rescue authorities in England are requested to complete a series of annual fire safety returns. The relevant ones are summarised in the following table:

Form number	*Legislation*	*Information requested*
FSR1a&b	1971 Act	Number of inspections, re-inspections and consultations by fire safety staff, and number of staff hours by type of premises
FSR2a&b	1971 Act	Number of inspections, re-inspections and consultations by operational staff, and number of staff hours by type of premises
FSR4A	1971 Act	Number of certificates issued and progress of applications by type of premises
FSR4C	1971 Act	Number of exemptions from the requirement to have a fire certificate by type of premises
FSR4D	1971 Act	Number of appeals under section 9 of the Act by type of premises
FSR4E	1971 Act	Number of prosecutions and contraventions by type of premises
FSR4F	1971 Act	Number of prohibition notices under section 10 by type of premises
FSR4G	1997 Regulations	Number of enforcement notices served under Section 13 (1)

Fire Losses

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Association of British Insurers (ABI), *(b)* the business community, *(c)* fire and rescue authorities and *(d)* other stakeholders regarding the rise in actual fire losses announced by the ABI. [61058]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regularly engages its key stakeholders at various levels on matters pertaining to fire safety through the Business and Community Safety Forum. The forum brings together representatives from the Association of British Insurers, the business community, the fire and rescue authorities and other key stakeholders to provide advice on a range of fire-related issues, and in particular the reduction of fire risk. These organisations are also represented on the Arson Control Forum which meets regularly to look specifically at issues surrounding deliberate fires.

Firefighters (Pensions)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme joined the scheme *(a)* before the age of (i) 20, (ii) 25, (iii) 30, (iv) 35, (v) 40 and (vi) 45 and *(b)* when they were over 45 years. [61394]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Of active members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme in England who were serving on 31 December 2004, it is estimated that:

(a) (i) 16 per cent. joined before the age of 20;

(ii) 63 per cent. joined before the age of 25;

(iii) 91 per cent. joined before the age of 30;

(iv) 97 per cent. joined before the age of 35;

(v) 99 per cent. joined before the age of 40;

(vi) more than 99 per cent. joined before the age of 45;

(b) less than 1 per cent. joined when they were aged 45 years or over.

The age at which current pensioner members and deferred pensioner members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme joined the scheme is not held centrally.

Local Government (Pensions)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of members of the local government pension scheme joined the scheme *(a)* before the age of (i) 20, (ii) 25, (iii) 30, (iv) 35, (v) 40 and (vi) 45 and *(b)* when they were over 45 years. [61396]

Mr. Woolas: This information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Local Government Restructuring

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to abolish multi-member wards in local government. [52789]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has launched a public debate about the governance arrangements for local areas. We are listening to all views on governance arrangements, some of which may have implications for electoral arrangements in local authorities. We plan to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the summer.

Mini-Motorcycles

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what powers local authorities have to prohibit the use of unregistered mini-motorcycles in designated areas. [62020]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

It is illegal to use unregistered mini-motorcycles on the public highway. They can be used off the public highway, provided permission is given by the relevant landowner, and subject to any statutory controls (e.g. a noise abatement notice issued by a local authority).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has recently issued a circular giving guidance on the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way and off-road in the countryside.

http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/index.htm

The guidance refers to powers currently available to police and local authorities for tackling illegal and inappropriate motor vehicle use, but points out that there are additional ways in which local communities, with police and local authorities, and relevant organisations, can work together to provide solutions.

HEALTH

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) if she will list those stakeholders who were consulted about the changes made to the new abortion notification form; if she will place in the Library the responses received; and if she will make a statement; [59458]

(2) if she will make a statement on the changes to the new abortion notification form. [59462]

Caroline Flint: The Department's consultation on changes to the abortion notification form (April 2000) and the outcome of that consultation (April 2002) set out the stakeholders consulted and why the form was reviewed and the changes made to the form (which took effect from 18 April 2002). These documents, which include references to the key points consultees made, have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the Government's progress in reducing the number of abortions. [60852]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 250W.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will amend the abortion notification form to provide for the inclusion of the method of abortion known as partial-birth abortion; and if she will make a statement. [60853]

Caroline Flint: We have no current plans to amend the abortion notification form. The form, which is sent to the Chief Medical Officer after each abortion is performed, already collects the method of abortion used and each form is checked.

We are not aware of the procedure referred to as partial-birth abortion being used in Great Britain.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of performing an abortion was in NHS hospitals in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1983, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1992 and *(e)* each year since 1993. [60929]

Caroline Flint: The available information is shown in the table. Costs before 1998 are not held centrally.

	Cost (£)
1998	324
1999	343
2000	351
2001	400
2002	441
2003	486
2004	503

Source:
National Schedule of Reference Costs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on her Department's medical abortion pilot; [60932]

(2) how much her Department has spent on the medical abortion pilot; where each is *(a)* taking place and *(b)* planned to take place; and if she will make a statement; [60933]

(3) what research her Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* plans to undertake into the longer-term benefits and risks of the medical abortion pilot; and if she will make a statement. [60934]

Caroline Flint: Under the Abortion Act 1967, an abortion can only be performed in a hospital vested in a national health service trust, primary care trust or foundation trust or in an approved independent sector place.

Section l(3a) of the Abortion Act 1967 gives the Secretary of State for Health the power to approve a class of place to perform medical abortion which could enable this method to be available in a wider range of healthcare settings. Two hospitals are being funded by the Department to run early medical abortion services in non-traditional settings, to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of provision in these settings. One site is within a community hospital; the other is in a stand-alone unit within an acute hospital. Both sites have been running since 2004.

The Department has spent £263,000. The money has been used to set up the service and to support the funding of the service.

The Department is in the process of tendering a formal evaluation to assess the safety, effectiveness and patient acceptability of providing early medical abortion services in non-traditional settings.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the categories of accident and emergency (A&E) departments; and what the criteria are for determining into which category an A&E department falls. [57881]

Mr. Byrne: There are three types of accident and emergency (A&E) department for reporting purposes. Primary care trusts and national health service trusts together with strategic health authorities are expected to use this to determine into which category an individual service falls. The current definition is as follows:

> Type one A&E department, which is a consultant led 24-hour service with full resuscitation facilities and designated accommodation for the reception of A&E patients;
>
> Type two A&E department, which is a consultant led single speciality A&E service, for example ophthalmology or dental, with designated accommodation for the reception of patients.
>
> Type three A&E department, which is other type of A&E or minor injury units with designated accommodation for the reception of A&E patients.

A type three department may be doctor led or nurse led. A defining characteristic of a service qualifying as a type three department is that it treats at least minor injuries and illnesses, for example sprains, and can be routinely accessed without appointment. A service mainly or entirely appointment based, for example a general practitioner practice or outpatient clinic, is not a type three A&E service even though it may treat a number of patients with minor illness or injury.

Notes:

Type three services include all NHS walk in centres and other open access treatment services offering at least minor injury/illness services, whether located alongside a main A&E department or at another location.

Alcohol Dependency

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much each primary care trust in England will receive to treat alcohol dependency in 2007–08. [58357]

Caroline Flint: The alcohol needs assessment research programme published by the Department last year found that the Government spends an estimated £217 million on alcohol treatment each year. In 2007–08, primary care trusts in England will receive an additional £15 million to treat alcohol dependency. Allocations for individual trusts are not known at this time.

Asperger's Syndrome

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research she has commissioned on whether there are links between drug and alcohol dependency and Asperger's Syndrome; and what advice she is offering to those involved in *(a)* medical research and *(b)* medical practice on this issue. [55372]

Caroline Flint: The Department has not made any specific recent research into links between Asperger's Syndrome and drug or alcohol dependency.

Cancer

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the trend in the incidence of *(a)* non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, *(b)* breast cancer and *(c)* multiple myeloma in (i) men and (ii) women; and if she will make a statement. [62170]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 29 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the trend in incidence of *(a)* non-Hodgkin's lymphoma *(b)* breast cancer and *(c)* multiple myeloma in (i) men and (ii) women. (62170)

The latest available incidence figures are for the year 2003. Directly age-standardised registration rates per 100,000 population, by site and sex, in each year between 1994 and 2003, are available in Table 10 of the Annual Reference Volume, Cancer statistics: Registrations, Series MB1. These are available on the National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=8843&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=272

The most recent trends in incidence for the cancer sites requested are given in the table below for England.

Directly age-standardised[1] registration rates (per 100,000 population) for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, breast cancer and multiple myeloma, by sex, 1994–2003, England

Site[2]/sex	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma					
M	14.2	13.8	13.8	14.4	14.7
F	9.7	9.3	9.3	9.9	10.5
Breast					
M	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	1.0
F	103.5	105.6	106.3	113.1	113.3
Myeloma					
M	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.8
F	3.6	4.0	3.5	3.6	3.8

Site[2]/sex	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma					
M	15.1	15.2	15.4	14.9	15.3
F	10.8	10.9	10.9	10.7	11.1
Breast					
M	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.0
F	116.5	113.8	114.5	114	120.3
Myeloma					
M	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.7
F	3.7	4.0	3.5	3.6	3.7

[1] Directly age-standardised using the European Standard Population.

[2] For cancers registered in 2003, site is based on codes in the International Classification of Diseases. Tenth Revision (ICD 10). Malignant neoplasms of the breast are defined by code C50, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma by codes C82–85, and multiple myeloma and malignant plasma cell neoplasms by code C90.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has *(a)* to ensure that cancer patients are made aware of benefits to which they may be entitled at each stage of the patient journey and *(b)* to provide training for healthcare professionals to play a signposting role for patients about benefits to which they may be entitled; and whether there is a timetable for (i) drawing up and (ii) implementing such plans. [61889]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* "Our Health, Our Care, Our say; a new direction for community services" proposes that an information prescription will be developed for people with long-term health and social care needs. The information prescription will signpost people, including patients with cancer, to further information and advice about services, including where to get advice and information on benefits. We expect support, such as training, that professionals might need to give information prescriptions to people, to be incorporated into pilots that will be taking place before the prescription is introduced in 2008.

Chronic Hepatitis B

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England have been diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B. [60232]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not available centrally.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) carries out surveillance of laboratory reports of acute hepatitis B infection as they provide a more accurate source for following trends in the disease incidence (new cases), help evaluate the current immunisation programme and inform national and local control policy.

Surveillance of acute hepatitis B infection in England and Wales is carried out by the HPA. Data on reported diagnoses of acute hepatitis B infection from 1990 to 2003 is available on the HPA's website at:

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hepatitis_b/data.htm.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what instructions on community hospitals her Department has given *(a)* strategic health authorities and *(b)* primary care trusts since the publication of the Health White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say; [55965]

(2) when she will issue further guidance for primary care trusts on how to apply the principles of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, in relation to community hospitals. [56597]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today to the hon. Member for Forest of Dean (Mr. Harper).

Digital Hearing Aids

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time between initial general practitioner referral and final fitting of digital hearing aids was in each hospital trust in the last period for which figures are available. [49241]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 20 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 141W.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was spent by primary care trusts on the public private partnership established for the provision of digital hearing aids in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and if she will make a statement; [60005]

(2) which primary care trusts have commissioned services under the public private partnership established for the provision of digital hearing aids; how many patients were treated as a result in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [60006]

Mr. Byrne: A breakdown of primary care trusts participating in public private partnership (PPP) is not available. Royal National Institute for the Deaf, who successfully managed the modernising hearing aids project on behalf of the Department, has provided a list of all national health service trusts participating in the PPP initiative, which has been placed in the Library. The allocated spending to all participating NHS trusts in 2003–04 was £3.5 million and 2004–05 was £5.6 million. The information requested on how much was spent by PCTs on the PPP initiative for 2003–04 and 2005–06 is not held centrally.

During the 2003–04 PPP scheme, 25,000 patient journeys were completed. From April 2005 to end of February 2006, 40,593 patient journeys were completed.

Drug Assessments

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are working on abuse of illegal drugs whose responsibility it is to carry out drug assessments. [47712]

Caroline Flint: The national treatment agency (NTA) monitors the workforce in drug treatment in England. The numbers of specialist drug workers working in the drug treatment sector have increased from 6,794 in March 2002 to 10,106 in September 2005. These are staff who should be able to carry out assessments of a client's substance misuse needs.

The original target to have at least 9,000 workers in the drug treatment sector has therefore already been reached. There is steady progress being made towards achieving the new revised target of 11,000.

These figures include all permanent and temporary staff whose primary function is drug treatment in the community. It does not include shared care general practitioners or drug workers in prison or all staff working in drug intervention programmes (DIP).

Prisons have approximately 1,500 specialist drug workers in prisons who may potentially undertake drug assessments. This comprises of 850 counselling, assessment, referral, advice and through care workers and 650 drug treatment programme staff. These figures are the total number of staff who may potentially undertake drug assessments. However, it may be the case that assessment work is undertaken by some staff and not others depending on team arrangements. The figures for how local or individual teams arrange their working practices are not recorded centrally.

Additionally, there are drugs workers in every custody suite, as part of the drug intervention programme, who, where necessary, conduct required assessments for offenders. Part of the planning for the implementation of the 2005 Drugs Act included working with local drugs teams to ensure that sufficient resources be available to conduct these assessments for offenders. As part of this process all areas implementing the Required Assessment provisions of the Drugs Act 2005, the drug intervention programme intensive areas, were asked to quantify the extra drug workers required to deliver this and additional funding has been allocated. Funding was allocated for some 370 new workers to deliver these required assessments.

We do not hold figures for GPs involved in assessment centrally but the percentage of GP practices recorded by the Healthcare Commission in 2003–04 within a shared care scheme for problem drug misusers was 35 per cent. The NTA set a 2005–06 target of 35 per cent. of GPs working within shared care. The results of this target will be published in April 2006.

In addition, by September 2005, 1,894 health care professionals had completed the Department funded Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) drug misuse e-learning module, 562 had attended face to face training arising from this, and 776 GPs had attended the more advanced RCGP certificate. A further 130 GPs were attending the course in September 2005. Over the same period nearly 300 other primary care staff, for example nurses and pharmacists, have attended the certificate training.

Fluoridation Schemes

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what public consultation process will be undertaken by strategic health authorities proposing new or extended water fluoridation schemes; and if she will make a statement. [62070]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* If strategic health authorities (SHAs) decide to proceed to explore the benefits of fluoridation, before carrying out a consultation under section 89(1) of the Water Act 2003 they should firstly consult the water undertakers concerned as to whether the arrangements would be operable and efficient. Regulation 3 of the Water Fluoridation (Consultation) Regulations 2005 no. 921 requires SHAs to publish details of the proposal in one or more newspapers circulating in the area and in such other accessible media as the SHA considers appropriate to bring the proposal to the attention of individuals affected and bodies with an interest. SHAs are also required to give notice of the proposal to every local authority affected by the proposal. They are also required to seek the views of their local authority at every step of a consultation on fluoridation.

The other bodies with an interest that SHAs are advised to notify include:

patient and public involvement forums.

professional bodies representing doctors, dentists and other health care profession.

voluntary organisations concerned with the health and social care of children, adults and

older people.

the Consumer Council for water and other consumer groups.

companies or businesses operating in the area who use water in the manufacture or processing of products intended for human consumption.

environmental organisations.

The response to the consultations will indicate the extent of support for a proposal and SHAs are required to take account of the cogency of the representations and their relevance to health arguments. A SHA cannot base its decision solely on a simple count of the representations for or against the proposal. In making its decision, the SHA should consider publishing a summary of responses, any changes made to the proposal as a result, a summary of the next steps and the reasons for the decision in line with the Cabinet Office code of practice on consultations.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the strategic health authorities that have commenced consultation with *(a)* the public, *(b)* other stakeholders and *(c)* water companies on commencing artificial fluoridation of water supplies. [62071]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have not started consultation on fluoridation with the public and other stakeholders as laid down in Section 58 of the Water Act 2003 and the Water Fluoridation (Consultation) Regulations 2005 No. 921.

We understand that Greater Manchester SHA is currently undertaking discussions on the feasibility of fluoridation with United Utilities, the water undertaker in the North West of England.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of the guidance issued to water companies on the legal situation should a strategic health authority request a water fluoridation scheme. [62073]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* The Chief Inspector of Drinking Water issued an information letter to all water companies in England and Wales on the 11 April 2005 together with a copy of the code of practice on technical aspects of fluoridation of water supplies 2005. Section 2 of the code of practice outlines the legal framework for water fluoridation as in Section 58 of the Water Act 2003 and the changes from original provisions within the Water Industry Act 1991 as they effect water companies in England and Wales. This guidance has been placed in the Library.

Food Standards Authority

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the merits of introducing proposals for a statutory traffic light of food labelling should the Food Standards Authority be unable to reach a voluntary code within the industry. [61483]

Caroline Flint: At its meeting on 9 March, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) board agreed recommendations for a voluntary front-of-pack signpost labelling scheme. The FSA is not advocating a legislative approach as it considers that working closely with industry is the most suitable means to stimulate change. Both the FSA and the Department are encouraged that certain supermarkets are taking up the voluntary scheme and that an increasing number of companies are considering applying this traffic light-based signpost labelling to processed food products.

Food labelling is governed by European Union legislation. The European Commission recognises that there is a need for simplified nutrition labelling and is reviewing the Nutrition Labelling Directive (90/496/EEC). One aspect of this review will be how to reflect the consumer demand for clear front-of-pack nutritional information.

Foster Report

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she received the report of Andrew Foster's review of non-medical professional regulation; and if she will make a statement. [62099]

Jane Kennedy: I received a draft of the report of the review of non-medical professional regulation on 30 December and a further draft on 6 March. I will make a statement when I publish the decisions we take on the report in due course.

General Practitioners

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors participated in *(a)* the general practitioners' returners scheme and *(b)* the flexible careers scheme in each year since they were introduced; and how much each cost in each year. [60468]

Mr. Byrne: Between November 2002 and December 2005, 376 general practitioners participated in the returner scheme. During the same period, 1,562 general practitioners participated in the flexible careers scheme. The schemes were devolved to strategic health authorities from January 2006. The central funding provided to support the schemes is shown in the table.

Schemes for general practitioners

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	£ *2005–06*
Returners	—	400,000	1.5 million	7 million
Flexible careers	—	3.6 million	16.7 million	

Health Service Provision

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on plans to extend services provided by *(a)* community hospitals and *(b)* health centres in England. [55601]

Mr. Byrne: As stated in paragraph 25 of the recently published White Paper, "Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services", the Department aims to provide more care in more local and convenient settings. This will partially be achieved by introducing a new generation of community hospitals and other facilities, such as health centres, with strong ties to social care.

The White Paper makes clear that any current proposals on the future of community hospitals in an area should follow the principles that it sets out. The Department wrote to strategic health authorities (SHAs) on 16 February outlining how SHAs should test primary care trust (PCT) community hospital proposals against these principles. A copy of this letter has been placed in the Library.

Interested PCTs will be able to bid for capital support for reinvestment in the new generation of community hospitals and smaller facilities. A document will be published after Easter providing further guidance to PCTs on generating support for a new generation of community hospitals and smaller facilities.

Hospital Expenditure

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure on *(a)* community hospitals and *(b)* acute hospitals was in each year since 2001, broken down by NHS trust. [58916]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested.

Hospital-acquired Diseases

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was allocated for the education of health workers on hospital acquired diseases in 2005–06. [59700]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Influenza Vaccinations

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps will be taken by her Department to maximise the take-up rate of influenza vaccinations by those eligible during autumn 2006 and winter 2006–07. [54393]

Caroline Flint: As in previous years, we will run a comprehensive marketing campaign targeting those in at risk groups. The campaign may utilise opportunities through advertising, national television and radio, press activity and public relations activity using media and stakeholders to increase awareness and uptake.

Irlen Syndrome

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to promote a co-ordinated approach to the identification and treatment of Irlen syndrome. [60136]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The best interests of children will be served by a scheme of assessment and treatment, provided in agreement between local health and education services, which takes into account the full range of possible ways of helping children with the symptoms associated with descriptions of Irlen syndrome. This is something that local education and health authorities should take forward in view of their responsibilities for services in their areas.

Medicines

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Type II variations to marketing authorisations targeted for approval within 90 days in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency business plan are taking longer than the target time for approval; and by how much each has exceeded this period; [53025]

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Type II variations to marketing authorisations took longer than 90 days for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to approve in the last period for which figures are available; and how long each took. [53761]

Jane Kennedy: In the most recent full-year for which figures are available, 2004–05, the assessment targets of 90 or 120 days (applicable where there are changes to the indications for use of the product) were 100 per cent. achieved, with the equivalent figures for the 90 day target for the years 2001–03 being 99 per cent.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is unable to provide reliable figures for more recent assessment of Type II variations due to transitional implementation issues associated with the introduction of a new information management system. Overall approval times have lengthened, mainly due to delays in validating applications, and assessment targets are not being met in a proportion of cases. However, urgent cases are being processed promptly. The MHRA is aware of the impact these delays are having on pharmaceutical company business and is taking a number of steps to improve its service levels. These include organisational restructuring, re-training of staff, voluntary schemes for extended working hours and information system performance enhancements.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will publish her new mental health proposals. [62249]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We issued a written ministerial statement on 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 29WS, regarding our proposals and will introduce the bill when parliamentary time allows.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the cost of the work undertaken on the Mental Health Bill since the publication of its second draft in 2004; [62250]

(2) what the cost was of producing the draft Mental Health Bills published in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2004. [62251]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have not made estimates of the cost of the work undertaken on the draft Mental Health Bills.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the basis was for her Department's recent decision on the draft Mental Health Bill; what discussions were held on the decision; and when the decision was agreed. [62278]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have spent a number of years consulting on how to update mental health legislation to keep pace with the growth of modern community-based services, to address concerns over public safety and to be compatible with obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. This includes pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Mental Health Bill 2004. The Government have taken into account concerns over the length and complexity of the 2004 draft bill and decided recently to introduce a shorter, streamlined bill which will be easier for clinicians to use.

MMR Vaccination

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on take up of the incentives offered to GPs to administer the MMR vaccine. [56604]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested.

Coverage with measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) at 24 months has increased by 2.2 per cent. to 83 per cent. for April to June 2005, compared with the previous quarter.

The Department's monthly sentinel scheme data, which collects vaccine uptake data earlier at 16 months, shows routine MMR coverage at 24 months to be the highest since reporting started in March 2002. London has recorded the largest increase. The Health Protection Agency predicts further increases should follow early next year.

NHS Dentistry

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists were available to NHS patients in Coventry South on 1 April 2005. [61757]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 31 March 2005, there were 44 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within the Coventry South parliamentary constituency.

Notes:

A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with their primary care trust. Information concerning the amount of time dedicated to NHS work by individual GDS or PDS dentists is not centrally available.

Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 5 July 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.

Dentists consist of principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded.

The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. Constituency areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Data on the number of dentists working only in private practice is not held centrally.

Source: NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Nurses (Retention Rates)

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent representations she has received on attrition rates amongst student nurses; and what data set her Department uses to calculate attrition rates among *(a)* student nurses and *(b)* student midwives; [53748]

(2) what the most recent attrition rates are for *(a)* student nurses and *(b)* student midwives; [53766]

(3) how many student nurses dropped out of pre-registration nursing courses in each year since 1991. [53767]

Mr. Byrne: We have received no recent representations on attrition rates among student nurses. The Department has used the higher education statistics agency (HESA) data to forecast attrition rates since 2002–03. Prior to this, the English National Board for Nursing and Midwifery supplied the Department with data on attrition rates from nursing courses.

The most recent attrition rates for both student nurses and student midwives is 16 per cent. and relate to a forecast for the 2003–04 in-take year.

Information for England on the number of pre-registration nursing students who have withdrawn from their university course since 1994–95 is shown in the table. Information is not held centrally from 1991 to 1993-94. Each year represents an intake year. A complete measure of attrition for a cohort of students will include withdrawal figures for each year of their programme. The figures should be viewed in the context of the large increase in students entering training over the same period of nearly 100 per cent., with attrition rates lower in 2003–04 than 1997–98.

Intake year	*Number withdrawing*	*Percentage withdrawing*
1994-95	3,967	32.41
1995-96	3,700	27.72
1996-97	3,024	20.38
1997-98	3,287	20.16
1998-99[1]	2,938	18.16
1999-00[1]	2,338	13.44
2000-01[1]	1,035	6.21
2001-02[3]	n/a	n/a
2002-03[2]	12,785	18
2003-04[2]	10,300	16

[1] This data is not complete as it does not include withdrawal rates for each year of the course for the intake year specified.

[2] This figure is a provisional estimate based on HESA data. It is not derived from complete data on a particular cohort. Complete measures will be available later in 2006 and these will replace these estimates.

[3] No data is available for this year.

Source:

English National Board for Nursing and Midwifery for period 1997–98 to 2000–01. Estimates derived from HESA data for 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Paediatric Continence Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans she has to undertake an audit of the quality of care in paediatric continence services; [60471]

(2) what discussions she has had with the Healthcare Commission on the quality of care in paediatric continence services; [60472]

(3) what mechanisms are in place for the sharing of good practice in paediatric continence services provision between primary care trusts; [60473]

(4) which primary care trusts offer a paediatric continence advisory service. [60474]

Mr. Byrne: It is for the Healthcare Commission to decide whether to undertake such an audit. Incontinence is distressing for children and young people and can be indicative of both physical and emotional problems; it can lead to bullying at school and cause emotional and behavioural problems. Standard six of the national service framework for children includes a section on paediatric incontinence. The standard recommends integrated paediatric incontinence services and endorses the existing guidance. The standard is available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPAmpGBrowsableDocument/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4094571&MULTIPAGE_ID=4867894&chk=12SYw6.

The Commission is in discussions with departmental officials about its role in assessing the implementation of the national service framework for children, young people and maternity services, which includes quality of care in incontinence services.

The modernisation agency produced a benchmarking tool for primary care trusts (PCTs) to evaluate their paediatric continence services, benchmark with other PCTs, and to share good practice. This is available online at:

www.cgsupport.nhs.uk/PDFs/articles/good_practice_paediatric_continence_services.pdf.

There is also provision to share good practice between strategic health authorities (SHAs) at regular meetings of SHA children's lead staff.

Information on which PCTs offer a paediatric advisory service is not collected centrally.

Patient Appointments

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many health trusts are meeting the 48 hour target for access to primary care practitioners; [61329]

(2) what her Department's waiting time target is for obtaining an appointment with a general practitioner. [61331]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* The NHS Plan target is that patients should be able to be seen by a general practitioner (GP)within 48 hours.

Data collected from primary care trusts suggests that since December 2004, almost all patients have the opportunity to be seen by a GP within this timescale. In February 2006 it shows GPs reporting that more than 99 per cent. of people were in this position.

Pre-registration Nursing Courses

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what is the target attrition rate for students on pre-registration nursing courses; [52481]

(2) how many and what percentage of student nurses in England quit pre-registration nursing courses in each of the past five years; and what reasons were given by those leaving the courses; [52482]

(3) what the attrition rate was for each pre-registration nursing course in 2004–05. [52483]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire (David Taylor) on 29 March 2006 concerning numbers of students and proportions withdrawing from pre-registration nursing courses.

Analysis of higher education statistics agency data from 2003–04 indicates that of those pre-registration nursing students leaving a course prior to completion, the reasons for leaving and percentage of students is shown in the table.

Reason for leaving course	*Percentage*
Personal reasons	50
Academic failure	24
Health reasons	7
Written off after a lapse of time	6
Financial reasons	5
Transferred to another institution	3
Were excluded	3
Went into employment	1
Died	1

The human resources performance framework, published in October 2000, set a target of 13 per cent. attrition (leavers) for those students entering training in the 2000–01 academic year. Attrition rates are best determined in the light of local circumstances and will be addressed by strategic health authorities in partnership with their local providers of education and training.

Primary Care Trusts (Budgets)

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that the budgets of primary care trusts and hospitals not in deficit are not reduced in subsequent funding allocation rounds in order to free resources for those in deficit. [59653]

Jane Kennedy: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have the responsibility to develop and implement a service and financial strategy for managing the financial position within their locality. They will develop this with primary care trusts (PCTs) and national health service trusts in their area. Strategies agreed locally may include the creation of local reserves to deal with local problems. The size of the reserves and any contribution from each PCT will vary according to local circumstances, but the underlying principle will be fairness. Where local reserves are established:

> we expect SHAs to maintain the integrity of the allocations system with PCTs entitled to repayment of any contributions over a reasonable period not usually exceeding the 3-year allocation cycle, unless otherwise locally agreed;
>
> we expect SHAs to have full regard to the financial and service position of each organisation in determining how reserves are generated and applied; and
>
> we expect transparency both in the creation and use of reserves.

Radiographers

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many posts for radiographers in the NHS are unfilled. [58698]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* At March 2005 (the latest figures available) the vacancy rate lasting three months or more was 3.5 per cent. for diagnostic radiographers compared with 4.8 per cent. in 2004; and 6 per cent. for therapeutic radiographers compared with 8.8 per cent. in 2004. The number of vacancies was 356 and 98 respectively for diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers. This downward trend reflects the Government's successes in increasing both the national health service radiography workforce and also the numbers of students entering training to become radiographers.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress her Department is making on developing sexual assault referral centres. [56006]

Caroline Flint: The Department has been working closely with the Home Office and in October 2005 published the "National Service Guidelines for developing Sexual Assault Referral Centres" (SARCs).

The joint Home Office, Department of Health, Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers national sexual violence conference took place in November 2005. The key focus and aim of the conference was to engage primary care trusts, police and voluntary sector service providers to work together to develop SARCs locally.

Since 2003, Departmental officials have sat on the Home Office SARCs applications board which plays a key role in deciding how Home Office victims fund money allocated for SARCS should be granted for applications of new and existing SARCs.

The Department has been working closely with two existing SARCs to develop and set up Project Amethyst, a SARC for children based in London.

The development of SARCs is being taken forward through the work of the joint Department of Health and National Institute of Mental Health in England victims of violence and abuse prevention programme.

PRIME MINISTER

Capita

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the meetings his adviser on Government relations has had with *(a)* Capita, *(b)* organisations acting on behalf of Capita and *(c)* Mr. Rod Aldridge in the last 18 months; what the purpose of the meeting was in each case; and if he will make a statement. [61410]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 28 March 2006]:* None.

Dr. Chai Patel

Mr. Willis: To ask the Prime Minister in what capacity Dr. Chai Patel has worked with the Government since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [61040]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* Information on contacts between Government and outside interest groups and individuals is not held centrally.

TREASURY

Automated Cash Machines

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met UK banks to discuss free access to ATMs. [62479]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Treasury Ministers regularly meet representatives of the UK banks to discuss a wide range of issues.

Concessionary Travel

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Budget statement, whether his announcement of free off-peak national bus travel in every area of the country for every pensioner and disabled person applies to the whole of the UK. [62104]

Mr. Des Browne: Budget 2006 announced that from April 2008 every pensioner and disabled person will have free off-peak national bus travel in England. Transport is a devolved matter and therefore such decisions in respect of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are a matter for the devolved Administrations.

Construction Industry Scheme

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of initial applications to HM Revenue and Customs for renewal of Construction Industry Scheme Certificates since 6 April 2005 have been refused; and what the proportion was in each of the three previous financial years. [61703]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Rochford and Southend, East (James Duddridge) on 26 January 2006, *Official Report,* column 2254W.

Inland Revenue Guidance

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether a regulatory impact assessment was completed by HM Revenue and Customs on the excluding of appendix 4 of the May 2001 version of IR40 from the July 2003 version; [61705]

(2) whether a small firms impact test was completed on the exclusion of appendix 4 of the May 2001 version of IR40 from the July 2003 reissue. [61706]

John Healey: No regulatory impact assessment was required for this, because it was a change to guidance issued by the Department, rather than a change to legislation.

Judicial Review

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times in the last five years his Department has agreed to pay the legal costs of a claimant in judicial review proceedings brought against it; and if he will list the cases in which proceedings are complete. [57850]

John Healey: The only case within the last five years in which HM Treasury have agreed to pay all or a portion of the claimant's costs in judicial review proceedings brought against them was that of Friends of the Earth *v.* HM Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry. The Treasury and DTI have agreed to pay the reasonable costs of FOE. Those proceedings are complete.

Regional Economic Trends

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he made of the proportion of gross value added assigned to the Extra-Regio in economic trends 627 of February 2006 on gas and oil industrial production for each year from 1992 to 2004. [62109]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 29 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the proportion of gross value added assigned to the Extra-Regio in economic trends 627 (February 2006) on gas and oil industrial production for each year from 1992 to 2004. (62109)

I refer you to the answer given in the Official Report of 21 March 2006, No. 130 column 350.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Legal Aid and Advice Centres

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to protect law centres' funding as community legal and advice centres are rolled out. [60279]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) are seeking to purchase services from high quality suppliers who are able to meet the needs of local clients. As the LSC delivers its strategy for the Community Legal Service, announced on 23 March 2006, it will offer contracts to suppliers by means of open and fair tender processes. Contracts will be awarded to those that are best able to meet client needs and provide value for money. The LSC expects to continue contracting with a range of both private and not for profit suppliers.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

After-school Science Clubs

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills where the 250 after-school science clubs announced in the Budget will be located. [62254]

Bill Rammell: The location of these clubs has not yet been decided. We are currently planning how to take this forward and other commitments outlined in chapter 6 of the 'Science and innovation investment framework 2004–14: next steps'.

Bishop Wulstan Catholic School

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her Answer of 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 214W, on Bishop Wulstan Catholic School, when she expects to be in a position to take a decision. [61417]

Jacqui Smith: Bishop Wulstan Catholic School in Warwickshire is a poorly performing school–only 12 per cent. of pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE last year-that has experienced falling rolls-only 22 pupils are due to enter the school in September. Officials at my department have had a number of conversations with Warwickshire county council and the Archdiocese of Birmingham about the options available to secure better education for the pupils attending the school over the past few months. As the school has not been deemed by Ofsted to require special measures, the decision as to the future of the school is for the local authority to make rather than the Secretary of State, and therefore I can give no indication on the timing.

Business/School Links

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect on businesses of engaging in co-operative working with schools. [55162]

Jacqui Smith: The assessment of the delivery of education business link activities falls under the remit of the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 24 March 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question about assessing the effect of business cooperating with schools.

Preparing young people for the world of work and ensuring the country has the skills it needs are crucial goals for the LSC. That is why business and employer engagement with learners, and a step increase in vocational learning in our schools, are key objectives for us.

We are a key partner with the DfES in taking forward the Government's 14–19 agenda. This agenda has a vision of making all young people better prepared for their future employment, and giving them a wider choice of quality vocational qualifications than has been the case to date. The LSC is committed to putting this vision into effect through the 14–19 Implementation Plan published three months ago.

Clearly, we need to do this together with all our partners and stakeholders, including business and employers. We already, of course, fund a wide range of school/business link activity through Education Business Link organisations, and there has been a number of evaluations and assessment of that activity. We also fund the Enterprise Adviser Service, and are close to completing an evaluation of that Service.

The Implementation Plan refers to our forthcoming consultation on education business link activity and the way we can support and promote greater and even more productive engagement between employers and young learners. We expect that consultation to gather the widest possible range of views on how we achieve our aims—for the benefit both of learners and of business. Should you have views on this issue that you would wish to share with us, I would be delighted to hear them.

Care Grants

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people leaving care in the Tamworth constituency in 2004–05 received a leaving care grant of *(a)* less than £500, *(b)* over £500, *(c)* over £1,000 and *(d)* over £2,000. [58082]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally.

Cared-for Children

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent supporting *(a)* family members, as defined by section 105 of the Children Act 1989, raising children who cannot live with their parents and *(b)* other family and friends as carers raising children who cannot live with their parents in each year since 1992; and if she will break down expenditure in each year by the legal arrangements under which the children were living in each category. [60725]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children who do not live with their parents live with family members as defined by section 105 of the Children Act 1989; how many lived with family members in those circumstances in each year since 1992; and how many of those resided under *(a)* a residence order, *(b)* a special guardianship order, *(c)* emergency arrangements under Regulation 38 of the Fostering Services Regulations, *(d)* Fostering Regulations following a full assessment under Regulation 38 and *(e)* other private arrangements, including private fostering, in each year. [60746]

Maria Eagle: Information on the numbers of children who live with a family member outside the care system (including those cared for on residence orders, special guardianship orders and under private arrangements) is not collected centrally.

Information on the numbers of children who live with a "relative" (as defined by section 105 of the Children Act 1989) is not collected centrally.

However, the numbers of looked after children placed with family and friends foster carers is shown in the following table.

Information on the numbers of children who live with a "relative" (as defined by section 105 of the Children Act 1989) is not collected centrally.

However, the numbers of looked after children placed with family and friends foster carers is in the following table.

Children looked after at 31 March in foster placement with relative or friend, 1992–2004[1, 2] (England)

		Number
Age at 31 March each year	*All children*	*Foster placements with relative or friends*
1992[3]	51,000	4,500
1993[3]	51,400	4,700
1994[3]	49,500	4,700
1995[3]	49,900	4,700
1996[3]	50,800	4,900
1997[3]	51,500	5,100
1998[4]	53,300	5,800
1999[4]	55,500	6,100
2000[4]	58,100	6,600
2001[4]	58,900	6,900
2002[4]	59,700	7,100
2003[4]	60,800	7,600
2004[3]	61,100	7,600

[1] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

[2] Note that the figure for 2005 will be available at 30 March 2006.

[3] Figures are taken from the SSDA903 return.

[4] Figures for "All children" are based on the CLA100; other figures are derived from the SSDA903 1/3 sample.

The data does not specify whether these children were in emergency placements made under Regulation 38 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 (where the carer is yet to be assessed as a foster carer) or were placed with those already approved as foster carers by the local authority.

Child Abuse (Witchcraft)

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what date she expects to publish the study into child abuse in England linked to belief in witchcraft. [59938]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1860W. The report of this study will be published when Ministers have considered its findings and recommendations.

Construction Apprentices

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many construction apprentices there are in England, broken down by trade. [40779]

Phil Hope *[pursuant to the reply, 24 January 2006, Official Report, c. 1968W]:* The number of apprentices in 2004/05 classified as construction was incorrectly quoted as 95,900—in fact there were 54,200.

Correspondence

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the reasons were for the delay until 23 February in responding to the letter from the hon. Member for Manchester Central sent on 31 August 2005 (DFES Ref: 2005/0050065POJS). [58535]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* My apologies to the hon. Member for the delay in receiving a response to his letter. This was due to a technical systems problem with the Department's correspondence handling system.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many jobs from her Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [58504]

Maria Eagle: No jobs from the Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001.

Education (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in the Peterborough local education authority area are in families in receipt of *(a)* income support, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance and *(c)* working tax credits. [54863]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not available.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Denton and Reddish constituency have received the education maintenance allowance. [51746]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate Education Maintenance Allowances for the DfES and hold the information about take-up of the scheme. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 1 March 2006: I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "how many children in Denton and Reddish constituency have received the education maintenance allowance?"

Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and received EMA is available at Local Education Authority (LEA) level, but not at constituency level. By the end of January 2006, 1,840 young people in the Stockport LEA area and 2,287 young people in the Tameside LEA area had received one or more EMA payments in the academic year 2005/06 so far.

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Sharon Holmes at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4567 or Sharon.Holmes @lsc.gov.uk.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have claimed education maintenance allowance in West Lancashire in each year that it has been available; and how many she estimates will claim it in 2006–07. [45009]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive, has written to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006:

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "How many students have claimed education maintenance allowance in West Lancashire in each year it has been available; and how many she estimates will claim it in 2006–07?"

Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and received EMA is available at Local Authority level, but not at constituency level. The information relates to academic years.

During the academic year 2004/05, 7,081 young people in Lancashire Local Education Authority received one or more EMA payments. During the academic year 2005/06, 9,638 young people have received one or more EMA payments so far (as at 31 December).

Forecasts of EMA take-up at a national level have recently been revised to reflect better input data and assumptions. However, due to the complexities involved in producing forecasts at sub-national level, comparable forecasts for the academic year 2006/07 and beyond at LEA level are not available until spring 2006.

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Chris Bradley at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4512 or christopher.bradley@lsc.gov.uk.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people in Hammersmith and Fulham have been granted an education maintenance allowance in each of the last three years. [45269]

Maria Eagle This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "How many young people in Hammersmith and Fulham have been granted an education maintenance allowance each of the last three years?"

The table shows the number of young people who received one or more EMA payments in the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Education Authority Area in each of the last three academic years.

	Hammersmith and Fulham
2003/04	951
2004/05	1,247
2005/06[1]	1,207

[1] 2005/06 figures are at 31 December 2005.

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Chris Bradley at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4512 or christopher.bradley@lsc.gov.uk.

GCSE

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in Coventry South constituency left school with fewer than five GCSEs at A* to C grade in each year since 1997. [61755]

Jacqui Smith: The figures requested are shown in the table.

Proportion of 15-year-olds[1] not achieving 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] maintained schools only*

	Number of 15 year old pupils in Coventry South constituency[3]	*Percentage not achieving 5 + A*-C*
1997	1,133	60.4
1998	1,158	59.5
1999	1,117	60.2
2000	1,128	58.3
2001	1,193	54.0
2002	1,213	53.1
2003	1,225	49.6
2004	1,269	52.0
2005	1,280	53.1

[1] Age at the start of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).

[2] From 1997 includes GNVQ equivalences and from 2004 other equivalences approved for use pre 16.

[3] Pupils attending schools located in Coventry South constituency.

Higher Education

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools and colleges in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency take (i) students and (ii) students and parents for visits to local universities; and what plans there are to extend the service. [62247]

Bill Rammell: Visits to universities are locally planned and are funded in a variety of ways by schools, colleges and universities. For example, some schools and colleges use Aimhigher funds; and universities use funds provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) under the widening participation allocation, Aimhigher funding, or core funding. No record is held centrally of these activities.

From September 2006, universities wishing to charge higher level fees must have reached agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) concerning their plans for outreach and additional financial support that they will offer students from poorer backgrounds. OFFA has approved around 180 access agreements, providing approximately an additional £350 million in student financial support and £30 million in additional outreach activities.

Language Teaching

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on teaching in languages other than English in state education institutions; and if she will make a statement. [59813]

Jacqui Smith: We would certainly expect teaching in most state education institutions in England to be delivered in the English language.

One objective of the curriculum is to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. This implies that pupils in maintained schools in England should be taught to read, write and speak English as appropriate to their age group. Standard assessment tests (SATS) are also set in English.

Where pupils have English as a second language, schools have a responsibility to support them in developing their language skills so that they can access the full range of curriculum provision.

Modern Apprenticeships

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many heavy vehicle fitting apprenticeships were available in England in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [56274]

Phil Hope: Data on the availability of heavy vehicle fitting apprenticeships is not held centrally. Information on how many young people are currently participating in each apprenticeship framework is available on the internet at: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/partners/frameworks/apprenticeshipsdata

Nursery Education

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools providing nursery education have been put into special measures in each year for which figures are available. [60892]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 23 March 2006]:* The following table shows the total number of primary schools currently with nursery classes that went into special measures in each academic year from 1993/94 and the number of maintained nursery schools that went into special measures in this period. The final column shows the total number of primary schools, with or without nursery provision, going into special measures.

This table is based on those primary schools which have nursery provision now. Comprehensive data are not available to show whether each primary school had nursery provision at the time it was placed in special measures.

	Primary schools currently with nursery provision that went into special measures	*Maintained nursery schools that went into special measures*	*Total number of primary schools that went into special measures*
1993/94	2	0	3
1994/95	22	0	43
1995/96	34	1	68
1996/97	84	2	147
1997/98	110	0	210
1998/99	61	1	141
1999/2000	82	0	168
2000/01	46	0	100
2001/02	45	1	93
2002/03	41	0	99
2003/04	52	0	130
2004/05	18	0	55
Total	597	5	1,257

PE Teachers

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on the changes in targets for training physical education teachers since 2004–05; [60504]

(2) how many vacancies there have been for physical education teachers in each academic year since 1997–98; [60505]

(3) what the allocated number of physical education initial teacher training places was in each academic year since 1997–98; and how many are planned in each year to 2007–08. [60506]

Jacqui Smith: The total number of secondary school initial teacher training places will reduce by 1,000 in each of the next two years. Places will fall for all subjects except maths and science in which subjects there are still the highest numbers of school vacancies. This reflects the projected fall in the secondary pupil population, which is expected to decline by about 30,000 pupils per year for the next 10 years

In setting the numbers of training places for PE, we take into account a number of specific factors affecting the subject, for example the extra demand for PE teachers from the creation of specialist sports colleges and the National School Sport Strategy.

The latter creates demand for school sport co-ordinators in secondary schools, primary link teachers in primary schools, directors of sport in specialist sports colleges and partnership development managers for school sport partnerships.

PE is in a relatively strong position having had a substantial increase in the number of training places allocated to it, most notably in 2003/04. It also has a lower than average national classroom teacher vacancy rate.

Full-time classroom teacher vacancy rates in maintained secondary schools in England at January of each year

	Physical education	*All secondary Schools*
1997	0.2	0.4
1998	0.3	0.5
1999	0.3	0.5
2000	0.2	0.7
2001	0.8	1.5
2002	0.8	1.4
2003	0.6	1.2
2004	0.6	0.9
2005	0.7	0.9

Source:
618G survey

Initial teacher training places for physical education in England

	Number
1997/98	1,550
1998/99	1,450
1999/00	1,040
2000/01	1,200
2001/02	1,200
2002/03	1,200
2003/04	1,500
2004/05	1,500
2005/06	1,450
2006/07	1,310
2007/08	1,180

Publication Pulping

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the publications identified as pulped in quantity on page 62 of her Department's resource accounts; how many of each publication were pulped; what was the face value of each pulped publication; and what the cost was of disposal. [53120]

Bill Rammell *[pursuant to the reply, 13 March 2006, Official Report, c. 1876W]:* It should be noted that the figures given for the following four titles were incorrect. They should read:

Publication title	*Number pulped*	*Unit replacement cost (£)*
Framework for teaching mathematics Years 7, 8 and 9	51,682	1.30
Framework for teaching mathematics Years 7, 8 and 9	57,129	1.30
Framework for teaching mathematics Years 7, 8 and 9	57,768	1.30
Framework for teaching mathematics Years 7, 8 and 9	32,524	1.30

The materials, listed in my original answer were part of the total departmental stock losses of £866,000 in 2004–05. The departmental stock loses in 2003–04 were £5.724 million.

School Finance

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 15 February to Question [49418], if she will make a written statement on when she plans to place figures on school funding in the Library. [53832]

Jacqui Smith: On 16 January 2006 we placed in the House of Commons Library the latest release of my Department's series showing total revenue funding per pupil in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06, updated to reflect the latest GDP deflators. A version of the series is also available on the Teachernet website.

As I made clear in my answer to PQ [49418], the Department continues to work on figures for spending on school provision in the years before 2006–07 so that they are comparable with the new funding system based around the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). There has been no change in our plans for producing this data: it will be placed in the Library as soon as it is available.

The data I placed in the Library to accompany my written statement of 7 December 2005 on the School Funding settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08, sets out how much DSG each authority will receive for those years. That statement and more detailed information may also be found on the Teachernet website.

School Meals

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school children in each London constituency *(a)* receive free school meals and *(b)* pay for school meals, broken down by school. [60550]

Jacqui Smith: A table showing information on free school meals taken as well as pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals has been placed in the House Library.

Two sets of figures relating to the number and proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are given here. The first includes all pupils in the school, regardless of their age. The second includes full time pupils aged up to (and including) 15 and part time pupils aged five to 15 (inclusive). This second coverage is as used in the Pupil Achievement Tracker and Ofsted's PANDA reports and provides consistent school level comparisons.

Information on the number of pupils who pay for school meals is not collected centrally.

Ann Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when *(a)* the London borough of Hounslow education authority and *(b)* schools in Hounslow will receive extra funding to improve school meals. [62118]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are determined to transform the quality of food in schools and support the work local authorities and schools are doing to raise the nutritional standards of school meals.

In March 2005 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Ruth Kelly, announced a £235 million package to transform the quality of school meals. In October 2005, as part of a three year package and paid as part of their standards fund allocations, schools received a share of £30 million to enable them to fund local improvements such as increased training working hours for school cooks. A further £60 million (£30 million/£30 million) will be paid in 2006 and 2007. Over the same period, local authorities will receive £130 million (£30 million/£50 million/£50 million).

The London borough of Hounslow education authority received £138,419 from the Targeted School Meals Grant for 2005–06. In addition, schools were each awarded a lump sum of £1,070 per primary school and £1,500 per secondary school, with an additional amount per pupil. The per pupil amount for PRUs and all schools except nursery schools is 50p; for nursery schools it is 50p for half of FTE pupils, to reflect the fact that fewer pupils in nursery schools take school meals.

Secondary Schools

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many households have *(a)* one, *(b)* two, *(c)* three, *(d)* four and *(e)* five or more secondary schools within (i) two, (ii) three and (iii) six miles of their homes. [56915]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The information requested is shown in the following table:

Number of households[1] with one, two, three, four and five or more secondary[2] schools within two, three and six miles[3] radius

	Distance					
	2 miles		*3 miles*		*6 miles*	
Number of secondary schools	*Number of households*	*Percentage of households*	*Number of households*	*Percentage of households*	*Number of households*	*Percentage of households*
0	2,137,436	9.9	1,148,620	5.3	95,858	0.4
1	3,022,112	14.0	2,111,530	9.8	631,212	2.9
2	2,483,613	11.5	1,519,874	7.1	909,681	4.2
3	2,609,078	12.1	1,518,762	7.1	780,547	3.6

Number of households[1] with one, two, three, four and five or more secondary[2] schools within two, three and six miles[3] radius

	Distance					
	2 miles		3 miles		6 miles	
Number of secondary schools	Number of households	Percentage of households	Number of households	Percentage of households	Number of households	Percentage of households
4	2,344,903	10.9	1,350,711	6.3	696,538	3.2
5+	8,922,636	41.5	13,870,281	64.5	18,405,942	85.5
Total	21,519,778	100.0	21,519,778	100.0	21,519,778	100.0

[1] Data on the number of households are taken from the May 2005 version of the All Fields Postcode Directory (AFPD) produced by the Office for National Statistics. For each postcode the AFPD provides a count of non business/non industrial addresses.

[2] Includes secondary, middle deemed secondary, city technology colleges and academies.

[3] Distances calculated are straight line using the household postcode not the individual household.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition her Department uses of a small firm. [59287]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the response given by the Minister for Industry and the Regions, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Alun Michael) on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 198–99W.

Special Educational Needs

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what guidance her Department issues to schools and local education authorities on the staffing levels needed to teach children with special educational needs; and if she will make a statement; [58346]

(2) what representations she has received on the staffing levels needed to teach children with special educational needs; and if she will make a statement. [58348]

Maria Eagle: It is for individual schools and local authorities to determine staffing levels, having regard to the number of children with special educational needs, the range and complexity of SEN represented with a given school, the resources available and other relevant factors. School decisions will be informed by the Education Act 1996 which contains the current legal provisions applying to SEN, the SEN Code of Practice (2001) which provides statutory guidance, the associated SEN toolkit and other relevant publications, such as "The Management of SEN Expenditure" (DfES, May 2004), which gives detailed guidance on matters such as financial delegation, the division of responsibilities between schools and local authorities, maintained special schools and additionally resourced provision, and expenditure on independent and non-maintained special schools.

Previously, the then Department of Education and Science did issue a circular in December 1990, numbered 11/90 and entitled "Staffing for pupils with special educational needs", outlining considerations local authorities and schools might bear in mind when determining staffing levels for pupils with SEN. Following representations to withdraw this on the grounds that it had become outdated and misleading, the Department signalled formally, on 20 September 2005, its intention to withdraw 11/90. Comments and objections were invited from interested parties, namely the teacher associations, local government interests and special school organisations. In the light of these, which revealed no major objections, the Department confirmed its intention to withdraw the circular.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children in England *(a)* given a fixed-term exclusion from school and *(b)* permanently excluded from school in the last period for which figures are available had a (i) statemented and (ii) non-statemented special educational need. [58940]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table. Figures given in the table refer to cases of exclusion rather than the number of pupils excluded, as some pupils were excluded more than once during the year.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools [1,2]: Number of permanent exclusions by special educational needs (SEN), England, 2003/04 (estimates)[3]

	Permanent exclusions			Fixed period exclusions		
	Number of exclusions	Percentage of permanent exclusions[4]	Percentage of school population[5]	Number of exclusions	Percentage of permanent exclusions[4]	Percentage of school population[5]
2003/04[3]						
Pupils with statements of SEN	1,040	11	0.44	39,790	12	17.1
Pupils without statements of SEN[6]	8,840	89	0.12	304,710	88	4.1
Of which:						
SEN pupils without statements	5,240	53	0.46	133,290	39	11.7
Pupils with no SEN	3,600	36	0.06	171,420	50	2.7
All pupils[7]	9,880	100	0.13	344,510	100	4.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] For permanent exclusions includes both maintained and non-maintained special schools. For fixed period exclusions excludes non-maintained special schools.

[3] Figures relating to permanent exclusions are estimates based on incomplete pupil-level data.

[4] The number of permanent or fixed period exclusions expressed as a percentage of the total number of permanent or fixed period exclusions, as appropriate.

[5] The number of excluded pupils by SEN stage expressed as a percentage of all pupils with the same SEN stage in primary, secondary and all special schools (excludes dually registered pupils) in January.

[6] The introduction of the new SEN Code of Practice means that the number of children with SEN without statements reported in 2000/01 and later are not directly comparable with earlier years. Includes pupils with no SEN and SEN pupils without statements.

[7] There was one permanent exclusion and 12 fixed period exclusions for which stage of SEN was not known—these were included in total for 'all pupils' only.

Note:

Totals may not appear to equal the sum of component parts because numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual Schools Census and Termly Exclusions Survey

Sustainable Building

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the last financial year. [58751]

Maria Eagle: None.

The Department has concentrated on increasing the energy efficiency of buildings through its asset maintenance programme and improving IT equipment. Measures taken include:

installation of additional sensor lighting;

reduction of heat loss through renewing window seals;

introduction of software to shut down pc's overnight; and

replacement of monitors with flat screen monitors which use less energy.

The Department has concentrated on the reduction of water usage through installation of:

sprinkler taps; and

water hippos within toilet cisterns.

Energy self generation and water recycling measures will be considered in the longer term and as part of any refurbishment projects.

Teaching Posts

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* assistant teacher and *(b)* head teacher posts are potentially not open to teachers who have no religious beliefs on grounds of lack of religion. [62018]

Jacqui Smith: It is a matter for individual governing bodies to advertise for, recruit and employ those candidates they deem most suitable to be effective leaders for their schools. There are currently 20,873 schools in England of which 6,861 are designated as faith schools where the governing body, when looking to appoint a head teacher or deputy head teacher, may choose to inquire about a candidates' faith as part of the appointment process. In addition, we would expect them all to be aware of their responsibilities under employment law relating to equal opportunities.

Train to Gain Programme

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many extra places the Train to Gain programme is forecast to create over the next three years in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield District and *(c)* Normanton constituency. [54802]

Phil Hope: Train to Gain, which will be available in all Learning and Skills regions from August 2006, is intended to be a service that responds to the skills needs of employers.

Planning assumptions about the potential learner volumes for first Level 2 and Skills for Life that might be supported within each LSC region are a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom, the chief executive has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his letter has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 15 March 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding the Train to Gain programme.

Train to Gain is a new service to help businesses get the training they need to succeed. The service will offer advice on business needs, match training needs with high quality training providers and ensure that training is delivered flexibly.

It will enable many more adults to achieve a first full level 2 qualification and to improve their basic literacy, numeracy and language skills. The service will be driven by the needs of employers and so the principal targets relate to employers engaged (particularly small businesses which don't invest in skills training).

We are intending to work with around 33,000 employers in 2006–07, at least half of whom will be 'hard to reach'.

To allocate funding we use two criteria:

1. The number of eligible employers in each region (using the Inter Departmental Business register)

2. The proportion of the workforce without a first full level 2 qualification (from the Labour Force Survey)

Yorkshire and the Humber will be allocated over £15 million in new funding for Train to Gain in 2006–07.

Our planning assumption is that this will deliver around 22,000 employees on learning programmes. On a proportional basis within the region this should lead to around 8,000 learners in West Yorkshire.

University E-courses

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost has been of online university e-courses; and how many students have graduated through such courses. [59806]

Bill Rammell: It is not possible to identify these specific costs from universities' expenditure returns. We are providing record levels of funding which rise to £9.5 billion a year by 2007/08 to enable higher education providers to offer more flexible, innovative ways of delivering courses, including on-line courses. We are already producing over 300,000 graduates a year and, in 2004/05 over 180,000 students (mainly at the Open University) were already accessing on-line courses.

Vending Machines

Mr. Simon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the revenue to secondary schools in England from vending machines in 2004–05. [59951]

Jacqui Smith: The School Food Trust has provided advice to Ministers on standards that should apply to food and drink provided at times other than lunch. This includes what is sold from vending machines in schools. We are now seeking views on that advice from a limited number of key stakeholders in education, health and the food industry.

We will publish the full regulatory impact assessment alongside the final standards. This will consider any financial impact that proposals will have on the revenue to schools from vending sales.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 30 March 2006

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Pipe Organs

Steve Webb: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners how many pipe organs there are in the Church of England. [62549]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Church of England does not hold figures centrally for pipe organs in its cathedrals and churches. However, there are some 28,000 pipe organs registered in the UK (National Pipe Organ Register).

Most are in institutional settings such as cathedrals, churches, schools, civic and concert halls. A significant proportion of these will be in Church of England churches.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Departmental Staff

Bob Spink: To ask the Solicitor-General how many staff in the Law Officers' Departments are paid on a performance-related basis. [50486]

The Solicitor-General: Pay and performance management for all Senior Civil Service (SCS) staff within my Departments is based on a framework set by the Cabinet Office. As at 31 December 2005 the numbers involved were:

	Number
Crown Prosecution Service	27
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate	3
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office	8
Treasury Solicitor's Office	35
Serious Fraud Office	11
Attorney-General's Office	7

The SCS scheme includes a mixture of consolidated base pay awards and non consolidated bonuses, both of which are linked to individual performance and delivery.

Pay and performance management outside the Senior Civil Service is delegated to individual Departments and Agencies. All my Departments maintain systems which have a link between pay and performance; and some of the Departments run Special Bonus Schemes to provide a speedy recognition of exceptional performance by an individual or team. The numbers of staff below the SCS as at 31 December 2005 was as follows:

	Number
Crown Prosecution Service	8,111
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office	230
Serious Fraud Office	242
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate	43
Treasury Solicitor's Office	623
Attorney-General's Office	36

Michael McCartney

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General what the cost to the Crown Prosecution Service was of the trial of Mike McCartney. [61890]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service does not routinely ascertain the total cost of bringing prosecutions in individual cases. No assessment has been made of the cost of bringing this prosecution.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General what discussions he has had with the Director of Public Prosecutions on the trial of Michael McCartney. [62175]

The Solicitor-General: None.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment he has made of the cost to the Crown Prosecution Service of the trial of Michael McCartney. [62176]

The Solicitor-General: I have not made an assessment of the costs to the Crown Prosecution Service in bringing the prosecution against Michael McCartney. The Crown Prosecution Service does not routinely assess the costs of bringing individual cases and no assessment has been made of the cost of bringing the prosecution in this case.

The decision to prosecute in this case was made following a review of the available evidence in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The cost of bringing a case is not a factor that is taken into account in making decisions on whether to prosecute.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will instruct the Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate to investigate the conduct of the Crown Prosecution Service in the trial of Michael McCartney. [62177]

The Solicitor-General: I have received a report from the Crown Prosecution Service concerning this case. It discloses no reason to invite Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate to investigate the conduct of this case by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Price Fixing

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Solicitor-General what the cost is of the Serious Fraud Office investigation into price fixing among drug companies supplying the NHS. [57525]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office has undertaken a major investigation into a suspected conspiracy to defraud the NHS in relation to prices charged by suppliers for prescribed drugs between 1 January 1996 and 31 December 2000. The case is complex, involving a number of individuals and companies, and has taken a significant amount of time to investigate.

The total expenditure for this case:

Financial year	*Expenditure (£)*
2000	26,122
2001	417,536
2002	2,778,565
2003	3,384,928
2004	3,950,023
2005 (year to date)	4,420,317
Total	14,977,491

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Electoral Fraud

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps *(a)* the Government and *(b)* local authorities take to prevent electoral fraud relating to votes by (i) post, (ii) proxy and (iii) polling stations in the names of deceased persons. [62300]

Bridget Prentice: A person will be guilty of the offence of personation if they vote in the name of a deceased person, either by post or in person at a polling station or as a proxy. Individual Returning Officers are responsible for ensuring that elections are conducted in accordance with the requirements of electoral law. The presiding officer at a polling station, acting under the direction of the Returning Officer, may ask a person applying for a ballot paper if they are the person registered in the electoral register for the election, or in the case of a person applying as a proxy, if they are the person whose name appears in the list of proxies for the election, if it is suspected that the voter is attempting to vote in the name of a deceased person. A ballot paper shall not be given to any person required to answer either of the above questions unless they have answered them satisfactorily.

The Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 contain a range of measures that improve the security of postal voting and will be in force at the May 2006 local elections. The following provisions will help to prevent attempts by persons to vote by post in the name of a deceased person.

> Electoral administrators are now required to confirm in writing the outcome of postal vote applications.
>
> Postal voters must give a reason for the re-direction of their postal vote.
>
> The closing date for postal vote applications has been moved from six to 11 days before polling day to give administrators more time to check applications.
>
> Electoral administrators may check signatures on postal vote applications against any other signatures they may hold.

The Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament contains a number of measures that address electoral fraud, including attempts by persons to vote in the names of deceased persons. The measures include the following.

> There will be a new specific offence of applying for a postal or proxy vote as some other person, including a deceased person.
>
> After every election a list of all those who voted by post will be compiled which will enable fraudulent and stolen votes to be identified.
>
> Voters will have to sign for their ballot paper at the polling station to deter fraudsters and allow signatures to be checked if there is suspicion of fraud.

Party Political Funding

Peter Law: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of the public funding of political parties. [62320]

Bridget Prentice: None. The Prime Minister has announced that Sir Hayden Phillips will conduct a review of the funding of political parties. The terms of reference are to conduct a review of the funding of political parties. In particular:

> To examine the case for state funding of political parties including whether it should be enhanced in return for a cap on the size of donations.
>
> To consider the transparency of political parties' funding.
>
> And; to report to the Government by the end of December 2006 with recommendations for any changes in the current arrangements.

Sir Hayden Phillips will work closely with stakeholders including, especially, the political parties and the Electoral Commission. He has been asked to aim to produce recommendations which are as much as possible agreed between the political parties with a view to legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of her Department and its predecessors. [52118]

Bridget Prentice: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows.

> Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion.
>
> Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion.
>
> Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion.

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the compatibility of the Department's role as the sponsoring Department for the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) with the ACP's role in offering advice to other Government Departments. [62045]

Mr. Morley: While Defra and the Health and Safety Executive provide the secretariat to the Advisory Committee on Pesticides other Government Departments are closely involved in its operation. Appointments to the Committee are made by all Ministers responsible for pesticides in Great Britain and the Committee is also appointed separately to advise Northern Ireland Ministers. An assessor from each of the responsible departments attends ACP meetings. Advice from the ACP on particular pesticide authorisations has to be approved by all the relevant Departments before it is implemented. I see no conflict in the current arrangements.

Biofuels

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made in preparing for the introduction of the enhanced capital allowance for biofuels in early 2007. [59391]

Mr. Morley: Defra has been working closely with HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs in drawing up the state aid notification. As announced in the Budget report on 22 March, this has now been submitted to the European Commission. Consultants will be appointed to develop the administrative arrangements for the scheme and, in consultation with industry, to finalise the qualifying criteria and list of eligible equipment. Subject to state aid clearance, we envisage the scheme being in place in early 2007.

Capita Group

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what meetings *(a)* she and *(b)* Ministers in her Department have held with directors and senior executives of (i) Capita Group plc and (ii) its subsidiaries since 1 January 2004; and whether (A) Capita Group plc and (B) its subsidiaries have provided input (1) in writing and (2) in person to policy discussions in her Department since 1 January 2004. [61080]

Jim Knight: None.

Cattle Movement Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle movements were tracked by the British Cattle Movement Service in the last five years for which figures are available. [60369]

Jim Knight: The figures in the following table show the number of movement notifications received by the British Cattle Movement Service for each year. The actual number of animals moving would be significantly less than the annual figures quoted because both ends of the movement are required to be notified.

	Number of cattle movements notified
2005	14,147,712
2004	14,339,631
2003	13,597,790
2002	13,341,802
2001	8,928,908

Chicken Imports

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what change there has been in the level of imports of chicken in the last three months. [61560]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most recent trade statistics currently available are for January 2006, February data is expected to be available around 17 April. During the last three months available, the import level for chicken has remained steady at around 40,000 tonnes per calendar month.

	2005				*2006*	
	November		*December*		*January*	
Short description	*£000*	*Tonnes*	*£000*	*Tonnes*	*£000*	*Tonnes*
Poultry cuts and offal (frozen)	29,843	14,803	25,101	13,208	24,747	12,676
Poultry meat and offal (other than liver) prepared or preserved	23,465	12,106	24,361	11,272	25,780	12,378
Poultry cuts and offal (fresh or chilled)	18,681	9,504	16,954	9,517	18,344	8,870
Poultry carcass meat (fresh or chilled)	2,841	3,008	3,615	3,860	3,511	4,158
Poultry carcass meat (frozen)	1,033	898	1,288	1,153	1,090	952
Poultry, live—weighing not more than 185 g	101	20	215	21	52	5
Poultry, live—weighing more than 185 g	11	21	8	18	—	—
Poultry livers (frozen)	—	—	3	6	2	3
Total	75,974	40,360	71,545	39,055	73,526	39,042

Note:

Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA. 2005 and 2006 data is subject to change.

Source:

H M Revenue and Customs

Coastal and Market Towns Initiative

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total budget is for the Coastal and Market Towns Initiative *(a)* to final report stage and *(b)* for the implementation stage beyond final report. [61603]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* For towns currently engaged in the South West Coastal and Market Towns Initiative, the average award up to plan production has been approximately £45,000 per town.

The addition of the implementation stage is a new development introduced by the Market and Coastal Towns Association during the last year. It provides additional support of between £5,000 and £10,000 per town. It is likely that towns coming into the initiative from the next financial year onwards will be awarded £25,000 to complete their plan, as well as consultancy support of approximately £10,000 to complete their implementation stage. This reduction in overall costs will be achieved through the better targeting of effort and resources as a result of the lessons learned from previous years.

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list towns in Devon engaged in the Coastal and Market Towns Initiative; and which have completed the process and produced a final report. [61604]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* There are 20 Devon towns currently engaged in the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. They are as follows:

Crediton
Cullompton
Dartmouth
Dawlish
Hatherleigh
Holsworthy
Honiton
Ilfracombe
Ivybridge
Kingsbridge
Lynton and Lynmouth
Okehampton
South Molton
Tamar Valley
Tavistock
Teignmouth
Tiverton
Torrington
Totnes
Westward Ho!

Seventeen towns have completed and published their community strategic plan (final report). Honiton has just completed a draft plan and anticipate publishing a final version in May 2006. Lynton and Lynmouth expect to publish their plan in June 2006, and Tiverton aim to publish theirs in September 2006.

Departmental Finance

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases of financial irregularities have been recorded in her Department in each of the last five financial years; and if she will make a statement. [57544]

Jim Knight: Annual returns of fraud submitted by Defra, to HM Treasury for the financial years 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05, show the number of cases of fraud in the Department. These are summarised in the following table. Records of any other cases of financial irregularities are not maintained and could only reconstructed at disproportionate cost.

Type of fraud	*Number of cases reported*			
Internal	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Travelling, subsistence and allowances	20	6	1	3
Pay-related Frauds	—	—	1	—
Procurement Fraud	—	1	1	27
Fraud Related to Payment Processes	—	—	—	1
Income Related Fraud	1	—	—	3
Other	—	3	—	4

The Department has only been in existence since June 2001. Information covering earlier periods is therefore not available, and could be reconstructed only at disproportionate cost.

Information on Executive Agencies and NDPBs could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Policies

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Islington South and Finsbury constituency, the effects on Islington South and Finsbury of her Department's policies and actions since 2nd May 1997. [60731]

Mr. Jim Knight: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of reforms and improvements across a wide range of policy areas since 1997 to help improve the quality of life for local communities. These include broadening enforcement tools to tackle litter, dog fouling, noise and fly-posting. The issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for Islington in each of these areas are as follows.

	London borough of Islington—litter
Number of fines issued by local authority	256
Number of fines paid to local authority	179
Number of cases taken to court	3

Islington also has the power to impose Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting and noise. No notices have been issued by Islington for these offences. Improved monitoring tools and resources have also been introduced to help local authorities to manage local environmental quality issues at a local level, respond to local needs and target resources more effectively and efficiently.

The main source of funding for local authorities' waste management services is the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) block of annual Government grant. It is for the local authorities to decide what proportion of the block is invested in waste management services, including recycling. Funding is also provided from a variety of other sources to support recycling, the amounts allocated are set out in the table.

Local authority	*Funding type*	*Funding short description*	*Funding amount*	*Start date*	*End date*
Islington	Grant to relieve spending pressures on waste		67,220.00	1 April 2004	31 March 2005
Islington	Waste Performance Efficiency Grant (WPEG)	WPEG	193,470.00	1 April 2005	31 March 2006
Islington	Local Authority Support Unit DCS (LASU)	Land use planning	46,463.00	1 April 2004	31 March 2005
Islington	Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)	Phase 1 and 2	18,918.00 38,599.00 and	1 April 2004	31 March 2005
Islington	LASU DCS	Strategy	52,675.00	1 April 2005	31 March 2006
Islington	Household recycling incentives	Estate scheme	45,000.00	1 April 2005	31 March 2006

My Department is responsible for the Warm Front Scheme, which is the key tool for tackling fuel poverty in the private sector in England. Since its launch in June 2000 it has assisted more than one million households with a range of insulation and heating measures and energy efficiency advice.

The number of households that have been assisted by the Warm Front scheme in Islington South and Finsbury, each year since June 2000 areas follows.

	Households
June 2000 to March 2001	8
April 2001 to March 2002	77
April 2002 to March 2003	271
April 2003 to March 2004	11
April 2004 to March 2005	28
April 2005 to end February 2006	30
Total	425

In general, Defra collects information on a local authority basis rather than a constituency basis so not all information provided in this reply is specific to the Islington South and Finsbury constituency. The information provided reflects a significant proportion of Defra activity in this area, but may not be exhaustive.

Engagements

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits she has made on departmental business since 5 May 2005; and how many letters she sent in this period. [55710]

Jim Knight: Since 5 May 2005, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett) has made six keynote speeches in the UK and conducted ten official domestic visits on Departmental business. She has replied to 1,508 letters as of 21 March 2006.

My right hon. Friend has made a large number of more routine speeches and attended many international gatherings during the UK's presidency of the G8 and the EU, including chairing both the Agriculture and Environment Ministerial Councils.

EU Habitats Directive

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how UK authorities exercise their responsibilities under the EU Habitats Directive with regard to *(a)* the assessment of plans or projects likely to have an effect on European wildlife sites and *(b)* the consideration of alternative solutions and of imperative reasons of over-riding public interest relating to plans or projects assessed as likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of European wildlife sites in instances when a plan or project is of a type not specified by Regulations 54–85 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). [60301]

Jim Knight: Regulation 3(4) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) provides a general duty for UK Competent Authorities to have regard to the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected through the exercise of their functions. This general duty includes the need for competent authorities, considering plans or projects not specified in Regulations 54–85, to address the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how the UK authorities exercise their responsibilities under the EU Habitats Directive relating to *(a)* the assessment of a plan or project likely to have an effect on a European wildlife site, *(b)* the consideration of alternative solutions and of imperative reasons of over-riding public interest in the case of a plan or project assessed as likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European wildlife site and *(c)* European protected species. [61003]

Jim Knight: Competent Authorities have a duty to make sure their responsibilities for assessing plans or projects likely to affect a European wildlife site are carried out in ways that agree with the provisions in Part IV of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

Regulation 3(4) of the 1994 Regulations sets out a general duty for Competent Authorities to follow the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive if they may be affected when the Authorities exercise their functions. This duty also means that Competent Authorities, which are considering plans or projects not specified in Regulations 54–85, have to address the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

The same general duty provided by Regulation 3(4) also applies to the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive about the protection and surveillance of European protected species and any operations that might adversely affect them, their eggs, breeding sites or places of shelter. This includes, in particular, the need to address the requirements of Articles 11–16 of the Habitats Directive.

The same or similar duties apply throughout the devolved Administrations.

Farming

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will provide rural development funding to English farmers to develop farm health plans. [60037]

Jim Knight: We are currently consulting on the priorities for the new Rural Development Programme for England to run from 2007–13. In the consultation we do not propose to fund farmers for the development of farm health plans. However, £6 million of separate funding will be made available over the next two financial years to pump prime the farming industry to encourage active farm health planning.

Flood Prevention

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list research funded by her Department which is *(a)* completed, *(b)* under way and *(c)* proposed on the development of flood management strategies and plans for the Suffolk coast and its tidal rivers; and what is the estimated cost of such research between 2003–04 and 2008–09. [56930]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the principal authority with responsibility for flood risk management in England. Most of the Agency's flood risk management activities are funded by Defra grant in aid. The Agency is promoting five studies which are currently underway, namely Thorpeness to Hollesley Coastal Strategy (£330,000 between 2003–04 and 2008–09), Stour and Orwell Estuary Strategy (£575,000), Deben Estuary Strategy (£550,000), Aide Ore Estuary Strategy (£625,000) and Blyth Estuary Strategy (£565,000).

Suffolk coastal district council is developing its Felixstowe Strategy (£110,000), partly in partnership with the Agency for the southern part which covers flood risk as well as coastal erosion and is complete. (The cost given covers both the flood risk and coastal erosion components as Defra does not hold separate figures for these). A review of the Lowestoft to Harwich Shoreline Management Plan is underway, led by Suffolk coastal district council (£110,000). This will cover both flood risk and coastal erosion but the respective costs of these two components have not been separately estimated. Both these studies will be supported by Defra funding.

Fowl Cull

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what support her Department has provided to the north-east in preparation for a potential culling of fowl. [62408]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has issued extensive guidance to bird keepers on bio-security measures to protect their birds from avian influenza.

If it became necessary to cull birds, compensation would be paid for any healthy birds compulsorily slaughtered to control the disease. If needed, we would also establish a Welfare Disposal Scheme to fund the collection and disposal of poultry.

IBM Guildford

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answers of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 630W, on IBM Guildford, if she will place in the Library a copy of the official representations made to IBM. [56497]

Jim Knight: Every Defra or IBM staff member, who registers their car with Accommodation Section at Defra Guildford, is issued with the following notice.

Car parking information and procedures at Guildford

This note is intended to advise all vehicle drivers of the procedures and restrictions of parking at Defra Guildford.

1. Car passes

Yellow Passes: Cars can only be parked on site if a yellow car pass is displayed in the front window of the vehicle.

Red Passes: All new starters to the site can apply for a red car pass from Chris Wood ext 3396 or when their photographic site pass is made.

Accommodation Unit will regularly monitor the situation and as directed by the security guards, red car pass holders may be invited to park on site if space allows on any given day. As permanent vacancies occur red car passes will be exchanged for yellow ones in order of issue.

2. Car park spaces for disabled pass holders

Car park spaces especially designed for staff with a disability are available outside the main blocks and staff who hold special passes have priority over these at all times. However, these spaces may be used after 10am by everyone but will be expected to vacate the space if a special pass holder arrives to park later.

3. Visitors car park

Car parking for visitors in the visitor's car park must be reserved prior to their arrival by email to 'GUI.Accommodation@Defra.gsi.gov.uk' mailbox.

- The request must contain name & company of visitor; car registration if possible, expected time of arrival and duration of stay.

Also a contact name and telephone number must be included to ensure a space can be reserved.

Accommodation Unit will do their best to accommodate every request and a 'first come, first served' system is in operation with a maximum of up to 2 spaces for any one meeting being reserved in any one day, unless previously discussed and agreed.

A minimum of 24 hours notice must be given (unless in exceptional circumstances) and bookings will be taken up to two months in advance only. Accommodation Unit will continue to be as flexible as possible to requests for the visitor's car park during low usage periods.

4. Street parking

Due to the shortage of car parking availability on site it is clear that some staff and externals are using local side streets for parking. Accommodation Unit continue to receive complaints from local residents about cars being parked in an illegal manner and blocking personal drive entrances.

Defra has a responsibility as a good neighbour and we therefore ask everyone who parks locally to do so in a considerate and orderly manner. In line with the travel plan, we ask you not to park in Down Road, Pitt Farm Road, Daryngton Drive, Carroll Avenue, Gateways and Broadwater Rise. The council have established some controlled parking zones near by and wherever possible it would be helpful if you could park in these designated areas.

Further details can be found at http://intranet/regional/guilford/driving/code_con.asp .

A copy of the statement will be placed in the Library.

Merlin Biosciences Ltd.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has met *(a)* Sir Christopher Evans and *(b)* representatives of Merlin Biosciences Ltd. in the past 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [61764]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has met neither Sir Christopher Evans nor representatives of Merlin Biosciences Ltd. in the past 12 months.

Milk Co-operatives

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the impact of competition laws in the UK on the development of large scale milk co-operatives. [60035]

Jim Knight: The Department has not made any assessment of the impact of competition law on the development of large scale milk-co-operatives in the UK. We have, however, drawn the industry's concerns about the way that competition law is applied in the dairy sector to the attention of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Office of Fair Trading.

National Parks

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to implement the recommendations of the Wooller report into the funding of national parks. [61602]

Jim Knight: The Wooller report made recommendations for amending the model for allocating National Park and Broads Authority Grant. We have already taken forward its recommendation to introduce a baseline of £1 million per park into the funding model. We began implementing the revised funding model in 2004–05 and 2005–06. However budget pressures have prevented further movement in this direction. The position will now be reviewed in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The report also made recommendations on corporate planning. Officials are discussing with the National Park Authorities how these can best be implemented.

Single Farm Payment

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers have received their single farm payments to date. [58351]

Jim Knight: By the end of 17 March 10,116 Single Payment Scheme claims had been paid.

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the effect of delays in single farm payments on non-farming businesses in rural communities. [58354]

Jim Knight: Non-farming businesses in rural communities may be affected by cash flow issues faced by some farming business. All sections of the rural community will, therefore, have welcomed the positive action the Department is taking to ensure payments under the Single Payment Scheme are made as soon as legally possible, as set out in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's written statement on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 104WS.

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of farmers have *(a)* received their single farm payment entitlement statement and *(b)* had their statement validated. [58355]

Jim Knight: Almost all of the 120,000 farmers who submitted a claim to the 2005 Single Payment Scheme have received their entitlement statements. Around a third have validated statements.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the administration of the single farm payments scheme in Lancashire. [58448]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency responds to all correspondence relating to the single payment scheme. As the scheme is not administered on a regional basis, it does not hold records on representations specific to Lancashire.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will consider making interest payments in cases where single farm payments are delayed by failure to validate the mapping of farms. [58465]

Jim Knight *[Holding answer 14 March 2006]*: The issue of compensation does not arise as the EU regulations governing the scheme provide for a payment window that runs until 30 June. It is now March. Farmers have been aware for more than 12 months that payments would not be made before February 2006.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many single farm payments were made in February; how many payments have been made in March; how many letters of confirmation of the amount of single farm payments have been sent to farmers; what percentage of the calculations of the amount of payment have been shown to be inaccurate; and when she expects all valid applicants to receive a correct letter advising the amount of their payment. [58628]

Jim Knight: A total of 2,400 single payment scheme payments were processed and released in February, the last of which were in bank accounts by 2 March. By the end of 17 March, 10,116 claims had been paid. All those farmers receiving payment have received a payment statement setting out details of its value, including any deductions. Queries on the value of payments are being dealt with as they arise. Payment statements are sent as claims are authorised.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of delays in the single farm payment on the supply chain within the farming industry; and whether she has had discussions on compensation for creditors. [60485]

Jim Knight: To the extent that the agricultural supply industry has been affected by the cash-flow issues faced by some farming business, it should welcome the positive action the Department is taking to ensure payments under the Single Payment Scheme are made as soon as legally possible, as set out in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's written statement on 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 104WS. The issue of compensation does not arise as the EU regulations governing the scheme provide for a payment window that runs until 30 June. It is now March. Farmers have been aware for more than 12 months that payments would not be made before February 2006.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what percentage of single farm payments have been made; how many payments have not been made because of invalid returns; and how many payments have yet to be made. [59057]

Jim Knight: 120,367 applications were received for the single payment scheme. By the end of 17 March 2006, 10,116 (8.43 per cent.) claims had been paid.

The claims still to be made will include a number of invalid returns. The Rural Payments Agency is unable at this stage to quantify the number.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of claims made for the inaugural single farm payment have had letters of entitlements from her Department declared invalidated. [59349]

Jim Knight: Approximately two thirds of entitlement statements were issued to Single Payment Scheme applicants whose claims had not completed full validation.

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with contractors providing digital maps for single farm payments in the past six months. [59453]

Jim Knight: *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* The Rural Payments Agency are in daily contact with the contractors undertaking the digitisation. The contractor also provides a weekly progress report.

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many single farm payment cases are delayed due to digital mapping errors; and if she will make a statement. [59454]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* Single payment scheme claims are validated against a number of factors and a claim may have many reasons for being invalidated. Those claims invalidated due to mapping errors are not separately identified.

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many applications for single farm payments have been received to date *(a)* in total and *(b)* from the county of Devon; and what percentage of these have been paid. [59455]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 17 March 2006]:* 120,367 applications were received for the single payment Scheme. By the end of 17 March 2006, 10,116 (8.43 per cent.) claims had been paid.

The Rural Payments Agency does not have data available on a regional basis, as the scheme is not administered in this way.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many single farm payments were made to farmers in *(a)* England and *(b)* Somerset in the week ending (i) 24 February, (ii) 3 March, (iii) 10 March and (iv) 17 March. [59909]

Jim Knight: The number of Single Payment Scheme claims paid are as follows:

(a)(i) Week ending 24 February—213 claims had been paid

(ii) Week ending 3 March—2,882 claims had been paid cumulatively

(iii) Week ending 10 March—4,484 claims had been paid cumulatively

(iv) Week ending 17 March—10,116 claims had been paid cumulatively

(b) The Rural Payments Agency does not have data available on a regional basis, as the scheme is not administered in this way.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with Ministers in the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Parliament on the average single farm payment to be received by farmers with farms of comparable sizes. [60058]

Jim Knight: The Defra ministerial team meets regularly with Ministers from the Devolved Administrations, when the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) is a regular topic of discussion. The model of the SPS adopted in England is different to that in Wales and Scotland, so direct comparisons with regard to the size of payments would not be very meaningful.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many single payment scheme applications have been received from Bath constituency; and how many of those applications have received validated payments. [60509]

Jim Knight: 120,367 applications were received for the Single Payment Scheme. By the end of 17 March 2006, 10,116 (8.43 per cent.) claims had been paid.

The Rural Payments Agency does not have data available on a regional basis, as the scheme is not administered in this way.

State Aid

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the Spanish agricultural organisations of national importance as referred to in state aid approval notice N 400/2005 whose state funding has been authorised by the Commission; whether UK agricultural organisations of national importance have *(a)* requested and *(b)* been granted equivalent state funding authorised by the European Commission; and if she will make a statement. [59805]

Jim Knight: Aid scheme N 400/2005 provides for *(a)* start-up aid for new producer groups and *(b)* aid-related to the extension of the activities of existing producer groups. In both cases the remit of the producer group must extend to more than one autonomous region of Spain. We do not have information on the Spanish groups that have received aid, the award of which is a matter for the Spanish Government.

The aid scheme covered by state aid approval notice N 400/2005 is a national scheme which applies only in Spain. The UK has not sought state aid approval for a grant scheme offering a similar type of aid and we have no plans to do so. We have, however, obtained approval under aid scheme N 424/2003, to provide grant to English Farming and Food Partnerships which was set up to encourage and support collaboration and co-operation between farmers in England, and between farmers and the rest of the food chain. Grants are also available under the Agriculture Development Scheme (aid N 505/2002 extended as N 508/2005) for projects in England which involve collaboration and co-operation benefiting primary producers.

State of the Countryside

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in England were in the sparsely populated area analysed by the Countryside Commission in its recent report, the State of the Countryside; how many of those households were second home owners; and how many of those households that were not second home owners had access to a vehicle. [60586]

Jim Knight: The Commission for Rural Communities (which is an operating division of the Countryside Agency) used census 2001 data on housing stock and car ownership in its annual State of the Countryside report in 2005.

Analysis of data on housing stock reveals that, in 2001, there were 344,321 'household spaces' in sparse areas of England, of which 24,475, or 7.1 per cent., were categorised as unoccupied second residence or holiday accommodation.

It is not possible to assess, from the analysis that has been completed to date, how many households resident in sparsely populated areas owned second homes.

Analysis of the number of non-second homeowners in sparse areas with access to a vehicle was not included in the 2005 State of the Countryside. However, basic car ownership figures reveal that, at the time of the census in 2001, 252,908 households (82.4 per cent.) in sparse areas of England had access to at least one car.

Thames Basin Heaths

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what consultation with local planning authorities in the affected areas took place prior to the implementation of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas; [61348]

(2) if she will list the occasions on which the implementation of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) was referred to *(a)* in Parliament and *(b)* in public by Ministers in her Department prior to designation of the SPA. [61349]

Jim Knight: In March 2000, Thames Basin Heaths was notified to Parliament as potentially qualifying as a Special Protection Area.

It was classified as a Special Protection Area on 9 March 2005 following consultations undertaken by English Nature and my Department. All relevant local authorities were directly consulted by English Nature.

We do not hold records of when the implementation of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area was referred to in Parliament, or on all public references by Ministers.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about the implications of the implementation of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas for the ability of the surrounding local authority areas to accommodate intended housing allocations. [61350]

Jim Knight: My officials have had a number of meetings with officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, English Nature and the South East England regional assembly about the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Discussions have focused on how the intended housing allocations can be accommodated in a way that avoids damaging the conservation of the SPA, and on ensuring that our obligations under the habitats directive are met. These discussions have considered proposals for a delivery plan, which could provide a strategic framework for mitigating the impacts of new development on the SPA.

Officials will maintain a regular dialogue with partners involved in the draft delivery plan as it evolves.

Water

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average level of water *(a)* leakage and *(b)* use per household in litres was in each water company area in each year since 1996–97. [60108]

Mr. Morley: Figures for water leakage and household water consumption are published annually by the Director General of Water Services in the 'Security of supply, leakage and the efficient use of water' reports. Total water company leakage for 1996–97 to 2004–05, in Megalitres per day, was reported as follows:

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Anglian	242	240	206	190	194	224	192	216	214
Bournemouth and W. Hants	29	26	26	23	23	22	22	22	22
Bristol	65	59	56	54	55	55	53	53	53
Cambridge	16	14	13	13	13	14	14	14	14
Dee Valley	13	12	12	13	12	11	11	10	11
Dwr Cymru	357	329	306	288	260	224	192	216	214
Folkestone and Dover	12	9	9	8	9	8	8	8	8
Mid Kent	38	36	30	29	29	29	28	30	29
Northumbrian North	192	184	171	168	164	161	153	160	155
Northumbrian South	85	82	76	73	72	73	67	70	67
Portsmouth	31	32	31	30	30	30	30	30	30
Severn Trent[1]	479	399	344	340	340	340	514	512	502
South East	99	108	98	97	85	75	72	69	69
South Staffordshire	90	82	77	76	72	71	71	71	74
South West	129	101	92	84	84	83	84	84	83
Southern	113	99	95	93	92	92	92	92	92
Sutton and East Surrey	27	26	25	24	24	24	24	24	24
Tendring Hundred	6	6	6	5	6	5	5	5	5
Thames	108	906	770	662	688	865	943	946	915
Three Valleys	199	172	157	145	140	157	152	152	149
United Utilities	666	579	510	487	463	452	465	479	500
Wessex	129	110	100	88	84	79	75	75	73
Yorkshire	430	377	342	317	304	297	296	295	293

[1] In spring 2003 Severn Trent Water revised its water balance data. The company attributed most of the increase in leakage to methodological changes

Water company estimates of average daily household consumption in litres per head per day for 1996–97 to 2004–05 was reported as follows:

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Anglian	150	150	145	145	138	137	143	146	143
Bournemouth and W. Hants	164	159	157	168	161	161	160	169	167
Bristol	156	150	146	149	147	151	151	158	153
Cambridge	148	144	138	134	139	141	142	151	148
Dee Valley	151	145	143	144	143	143	147	151	145
Dwr Cymru	146	146	143	143	146	150	150	149	151
Folkestone and Dover	157	157	159	159	157	163	158	167	159
Mid Kent	166	164	165	168	162	160	162	173	167
Northumbrian North	143	143	146	148	147	147	145	150	146
Northumbrian South	160	159	161	156	157	161	155	164	158
Portsmouth	162	153	153	163	157	159	157	162	159
Severn Trent	136	136	137	139	139	139	130	136	132
South East	166	162	159	160	160	163	166	178	173
South Staffordshire	146	146	141	141	143	145	146	151	146
South West	152	151	152	153	150	151	153	160	161
Southern	156	158	155	157	155	161	159	162	157
Sutton and East Surrey	170	165	161	163	162	172	172	185	173
Tendring Hundred	146	139	122	126	124	127	128	129	125
Thames	159	161	155	165	165	159	162	162	159
Three Valleys	169	167	165	168	174	178	174	185	178
United Utilities	136	141	137	138	140	142	146	148	142
Wessex	143	139	135	137	140	143	142	151	146
Yorkshire	131	135	133	138	139	147	144	147	145

SCOTLAND

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60335]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office subscribes to the energy efficiency policies adopted by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice), on 21 March 2006, *Official Report,* column 301W.

Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the *(a)* Scottish Executive and *(b)* the Cabinet Office on the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill. [61407]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the Scottish Executive and other Government Departments, including the Cabinet Office, on a wide range of matters.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has made an assessment of the likely impact of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill on Scotland. [61408]

David Cairns: Certain provisions of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill trigger the Sewel Convention. The Scottish Parliament's consent is therefore required for those provisions in Part 3 of the Bill which will widen the powers available to the Scottish Ministers to implement EC obligations and give greater flexibility in the use of section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his Department's employer contribution rates to the principal civil service pension scheme are; what assumed rate of return underlies those contribution rates; and what the contribution rate would be if the assumed rate of return was in line with current redemption yield on index-linked gilts. [61996]

David Cairns: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy), on 29 March 2006.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has been accounted for by his Office in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61360]

David Cairns: The amount of employers' accruing superannuation liability charges in respect of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in the last five years is as follows:

	£000
2004–05[1]	397
2003–04[1]	455
2002–03[1]	435
2001–02	397
2000–01	345

[1] From 1 October 2002 new entrants have been able to opt for a partnership pension account, a stakeholder arrangement with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions to partnership pension accounts are not included in the figures.

TREASURY

Carbon Capture

16. Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial support he plans to give to the development of carbon capture and storage technology. [62341]

John Healey: The Government are actively working to build an evidence base on the economics of carbon capture and storage (CCS). At Budget 2006, HM Treasury launched a consultation exercise on barriers to wide-scale commercial deployment of the technology and the potential role of economic incentives in addressing those barriers. The results of this exercise will be fed into the Energy Review.

Consideration of whether there is a need for economic incentives for CCS in the UK is taking place in addition to support which has been made available for demonstrations of CCS through the Department for Trade and Industry's Carbon Abatement Technologies Strategy. The Strategy is providing capital grant funding of 35m for demonstration projects of carbon abatement technologies over four years starting in 2006–07.

In reflection of the global challenge which carbon emissions present, during the UK's presidency of the EU and G8, the Government initiated a project aiming to build a demonstration zero emissions coal plant with CCS, as the centrepiece of the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change. It is providing £3.5 million to fund the initial phase of this project.

Science Funding

18. Helen Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact on the economy of Government funding for science; and if he will make a statement. [62345]

John Healey: The social rates of return to R&D vary. For the UK they are estimated at over 80 per cent. for manufacturing and 30 per cent. for public R&D in pharmaceuticals. Just under 200 new university spin-off firms were set up in 2002–03 compared to 70 a year on average from 1994–99. Over the past two years, 20 university spin out companies have floated on the stock market with a combined market value of over £1 billion.

Council Tax (Pensioners)

Paul Rowen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria he used in making the decision not to include a rebate on council tax for pensioners in the Budget. [62343]

Dawn Primarolo: Any decision on the future of additional payments to pensioners must be taken within the context of Sir Michael Lyons' ongoing review into local government funding due by the end of 2006 and the Government White Paper on Pensions due later this spring.

British Energy

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with operators in the energy market on the proposed disposal of the Government's stake in British Energy. [62550]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers and officials discuss a wide range of issues with organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As was the case with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such discussions.

Business Investment

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to promote investment in business in the UK. [62323]

John Healey: In the Budget we announced a comprehensive package of measures to promote the UK as the leading location for inward investment. This included a new five year strategy for a step-change in the Government's drive to market UK economy internationally and a new strategy to promote London internationally as the world's leading financial centre. The Government will also implement a £9 million international R&D strategy, in partnership with the academic and business communities. These strategies will be supported by a reformed UK Trade and Investment.

Child Benefit

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was at current prices of child benefit in each year since 1996–97; and what percentage of the costs was accounted for by administration in each year. [59340]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the total expenditure on child benefit for the years 1996–97 to 2004–05.

Total UK expenditure on child benefit: 1996–97 to 2004–05

	Expenditure (£ million)	*Administration cost (pence per £ paid)*
1996–97	7,179	—
1997–98	7,340	—
1998–99	7,556	—
1999–2000	8,571	—
2000–01	8,960	—
2001–02	9,100	—
2002–03	9,255	—
2003–04	9,425	0.64
2004–05	9,592	1.05

Before 2003–04 the Department for Work and Pensions was responsible for child benefit in Great Britain. Comparable figures of administration costs for these years are not available.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter dated 13 February from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mr. M. K. Ghafood. [62434]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Economic Growth

Mr. Bone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of tax levels on economic growth. [62543]

John Healey: The Government's macro-economic framework has consistently delivered stability with strong growth and low inflation, thus establishing a track record that has been internationally acknowledged. GDP has now grown for 54 consecutive quarters and inflation remains at historically low rates. The Government's approach to taxation balances the need to finance better quality public services, deliver fairness and promote sustainable development while ensuring that the UK benefits from the advantages of being a lightly taxed economy.

Employer-supported Child Care

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the tax and national insurance incentives for employer-supported child care since April 2005; and if he will make a statement. [60628]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax and national insurance contributions exemption for employer-supported child care is designed to engage employers on the issue of child care and help parents pay for child care. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs are currently assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of the tax and national insurance contributions exemptions for employer-supported child care. However, informal qualitative evidence suggests that the scheme is working well and that the numbers benefiting may be higher than estimated.

Energy Companies (Windfall Tax)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of a windfall tax on energy companies. [62569]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government keep all taxes under review and any changes to taxation are considered as part of the normal budget process.

In PBR 2005 the Chancellor announced a package of measures to ensure that the North sea tax regime strikes the correct balance between oil and gas producers and consumers, by promoting investment and ensuring fairness for taxpayers. As part of this announcement the Chancellor committed to no further increases in North sea taxation for the lifetime of this parliament.

Financial Exclusion

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Wirral, West did not have access to a bank account on 31 December *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997. [62346]

John Healey: The most recent data available that allows assessment to be made of the number of households with no access to a bank account is the Family Resources Survey from 2002–03. This indicates that 8 per cent. of households in the United Kingdom had no bank account of any kind. This equated to 1.9 million households containing around 2.8 million adults. This data is broken down to Government Office regional level. This shows 9 per cent. of households in the North West and Merseyside were unbanked.

In 1997–98, the Family Resources Survey was collected on a Great Britain basis, excluding Northern Ireland. 11 per cent. of households in the North West and Merseyside were unbanked at that time compared to 8 per cent. of households in Great Britain as a whole.

In December 2004, the Government and the banks agreed to work together towards the goal of halving the number of adults in households with no access to a bank account of any kind and of making significant progress within two years. The financial inclusion taskforce has been asked to monitor progress. The taskforce recently made its first annual report, which concluded that steady progress has been made towards the goal but also encouraged banks to continue to address the difficulties faced in opening a bank account.

HM Revenue and Customs

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his Written Answer of 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 505W, on HM Revenue and Customs, what the reasons were for HM Revenue and Customs' decision to close its Basingstoke office; and what the findings were of assessments of the likely impact of the closure on *(a)* residents, *(b)* local businesses and *(c)* others in Basingstoke, with particular reference to equality impact assessments. [62600]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC's targets for improving efficiency and reducing costs include reducing staff numbers by 12,500 net by 1 April 2008, and making substantial savings on the cost of its estate. So it is looking critically at how many of its 600 plus staffed buildings it needs to keep, and in what locations.

The decision to close the HMRC office at London House, Basingstoke, was taken in that context. A break in the lease gave the opportunity to give up the accommodation. An assessment of the likely impact of closure found that there would be no significant impact on local businesses, residents or taxpayers. A face to face service for customers will continue to be provided at a nearby building.

The impact assessment identified the equality issues that will need to be addressed in completing the relocation, and HMRC managers will be talking to staff about how to deal with any individual problems the closure may pose for them.

Lymphoma

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been diagnosed with lymphoma in *(a)* Beverley and Holderness and *(b)* England in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [62363]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Jill Matheson, dated 30 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people have been diagnosed with lymphoma in *(a)* Beverley and Holderness and *(b)* England in each of the last five years. I am replying in her absence. (62363)

The most recent available figures for newly diagnosed cases (incidence) of cancer are for 2003. Figures requested are given in the table below.

Cases of lymphoma diagnoses[1] 1999–2003 in Beverley and Holderness[2], and in England

	Beverley and Holderness	England
1999	16	9.319
2000	25	9,297
2001	24	9.448
2002	27	9.319
2003	27	9,432

[1] Lymphoma sites are based on codes in the international Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD10). Hodgkin's disease is defined by code C81, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is defined by codes C82–85, C91.4, and 096.

[2] Parliamentary constituency.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

National Insurance

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what penalty fee was levied for late registration for national insurance contributions in each year since 2001. [62451]

Dawn Primarolo: A late notification penalty of £100 for the late registration for Class 2 self-employed national insurance contributions was introduced on the 31 January 2001. The penalty has remained at the same level since that date.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many temporary national insurance numbers have been issued by HM Revenue and Customs in each year since 1997; and what proportion of these have been for tax credit purposes. [62544]

Dawn Primarolo: Temporary national insurance numbers can be issued by HMRC once the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have confirmed that a claimant has attended and passed an evidence of identity interview at their local DWP office.

Recent analysis of tax credit claimant data shows that HM Revenue and Customs issued around 16,000 temporary references using a Nino format for tax credit purposes between April 2003 and March 2004, around 6,000 between April 2004 and March 2005 and around 13,000 April 2005 to date.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many bills were issued in the last year for which information is available for national insurance contributions which had remained unpaid for more than six years; and what was the total value of such bills. [62401]

Dawn Primarolo: Full information relating to Class 2 national insurance bills could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Public Sector Bodies' Debt

James Brokenshire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the level of transparency of the classification of public sector bodies' debt. [62331]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on the Floor of the House earlier today to the hon. Member for Lichfield (Michael Fabricant).

Tax Bulletin 79

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date HM Revenue and Customs published Tax Bulletin 79; and what changes the bulletin made to eligibility for tax relief under section 336 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003. [62298]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax Bulletin 79 was published on 24 October 2005. It made no changes to an employee's entitlement for tax relief under section 336.

However, it contained an article announcing a relaxation of HMRC's view of the circumstances in which employees can claim tax relief for un-reimbursed home working expenses. It means more employees will be able to claim tax relief for the additional expenses they incur where they have to work from home.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date HM Revenue and Customs published the guidance in the Employment Income Manual section EIM32760 which was superseded by Tax Bulletin 79. [62299]

Dawn Primarolo: The guidance in the Employment Income Manual section EIM32760 reflects longstanding guidance published in earlier Inland Revenue guidance manuals. It was published in its current format on 29 May 2003 following the introduction of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003.

Tax Credits

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the median *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* working families tax credit payment received by (i) lone parent households and (ii) non-lone parent households was in each year for which figures are available. [43764]

Dawn Primarolo: Lone parent and couple families receive the same award where their family income and other circumstances (such as the number of children) are the same. There are a number of factors affecting average awards, including:

couple families tend to have more children, increasing their child tax credit (CTC) award. (The December 2005 tax credit statistics showed that in-work couple families had on average 1.8 children per family compared to 1.5 for in-work lone parents.);

lone parents tend to have lower incomes than couple families, increasing their award. (The statistics show that 27 per cent. of in-work lone parent families have gross incomes below £5,220 compared to 4 per cent. of in-work couple families.); and

lone parents are more likely to benefit from the childcare element of the working tax credit (WTC) designed to help more people move into work. (The statistics show around two-thirds of recipients of the child care element are lone parents, with the remaining third being couple families.)

The median weekly entitlements to WTC and CTC are £109.96 for lone parent families and £96.50 for couples with children, based on finalised 2003–04 awards. The median weekly entitlements for working families tax credit are £88.95 for lone parent families and £75.59 for couples with children, based on figures for November 2002. Such data for later years are not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what proportion of tax credit claimants received manual payments due to computer system failure in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date. [60190]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available in the format requested.

For the reasons for issuing manual payments I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (John Hemming) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 325W.

HM Revenue and Customs are working hard to improve administration, address technical issues and minimise impact on taxpayers.

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants in Lewes constituency are receiving regular manual payments each month due to computer error; and what steps are being taken to ensure that all claimants receive regular automatic payments. [60858]

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants in Ribble Valley constituency are receiving regular manual payments each month due to computer error; and what steps are being taken to ensure that all claimants receive regular automatic payments. [61641]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) on 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1983–84W.

Not all manual payments are required because of computer error. Manual payments of tax credits are made to a very small percentage of claimants; however numbers are not available at constituency level.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his latest estimate is of the costs of organised fraud of the tax credits system in each quarter from Q1 2003 to Q1 2006; and if he will make a statement; [61854]

(2) when he was first informed of organised tax credit fraud; and if he will make a statement. [62172]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Gentleman on 10 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 551W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will answer question 48439, tabled by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead on 31 January 2006, on child tax credit. [62024]

Dawn Primarolo: I very much regret not being in a position to answer my right hon. Friend's earlier question. I will do so very shortly and will also write to my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Exchequer how many penalty payments have been agreed between HM Revenue and Customs and recipients of tax credits following overpayments *(a)* in total and *(b)* in each compliance office in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in the last year for which information is available; and how many involved payments of (i) less than £250, (ii) £250-£499, (iii) £500-£999, (iv) £1,000 and over in respect of overpayments of (A) less than £2,500, (B) £2,500-£4,999, (C) £5,000-£9,999 and (D) £10,000 or more. [58890]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC does not impose penalties for overpayments. It can and does impose monetary penalties where people deliberately or negligently make incorrect statements.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to re-open the tax credits e-portal; and if he will make a statement. [62035]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Ruffley) on 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 441W.

Tonnage Tax Scheme

Gwyn Prosser: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value was of financial concessions to the UK shipping industry through the tonnage tax scheme in 2004–05. [62513]

John Healey: An initial estimate of the corporation tax foregone in 2004–05 can be found at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/tax_expenditures/b1_dec05.xls

Trade Targets (China/India)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent targets he has set for trade with *(a)* China and *(b)* India. [62255]

John Healey: As the balance of global economic activity shifts, the UK needs to strengthen its links with China and India to capitalise on the new opportunities that increasing investment flows and trade can offer. The Budget set out a comprehensive package of measures to address this.

Tyler-CLT User Conference

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether representatives from *(a)* the Valuation Office Agency, *(b)* HM Treasury and *(c)* the Valuation Tribunal Service will attend the 2006 Tyler-CLT User conference in Utah, USA in April 2006. [60195]

Dawn Primarolo: No representatives from *(a)* the Valuation Office Agency *(b)* HM Treasury nor *(c)* the Valuation Tribunal Service will be attending the Tyler-CLT conference in Utah, USA in April 2006.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Valuation Office Agency has spent on foreign travel, including subsistence, for staff in each year since 1997–98. [60101]

Dawn Primarolo: Regarding the cost of foreign visits, I refer the right hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1502W, and 28 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 685W.

For clarification it should be noted that the costs quoted for foreign travel are exclusive of subsistence. Subsistence for foreign trips is included within the figures quoted for the Agency as a whole. Separate figures for subsistence claimed for foreign trips are not readily obtainable and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

VAT Relief

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is permitted under EU VAT rules to extend the zero rates applied to the services of providing, extending or adapting a bathroom or washroom and those areas covered in section 6 of VAT reliefs for disabled people (HMRC Reference: Notice 701/7, August 2002) to other areas in the private residences or residential accommodation of disabled people. [62593]

Dawn Primarolo: Under agreements with our European partners we can keep our existing zero rates of VAT but we are not able to extend them or introduce any new ones.

Women Entrepreneurs

Barbara Follett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the Department for Trade and Industry on developing micro-finance programmes tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs. [62342]

John Healey: HM Treasury Ministers and officials have regular meetings with counterparts in the Department of Trade and Industry and other departments, and with other organisations in both the public and private sectors, to discuss a wide range of issues as part of the normal processes of enterprise policy analysis and development.

Youth Volunteering

Mr. Flello: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the funding he has allocated for youth volunteering. [62344]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave on the Floor of the House earlier today to the hon. Member for North Durham (Mr. Jones).

TRANSPORT

Cargo Transfers

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the status is of the draft regulations covering ship-to-ship transfer of oil and other chemicals in UK territorial seas; and when he expects to introduce the final regulations. [60304]

Dr. Ladyman: The secondary legislation which will regulate ship-to-ship transfers within the limits of the UK's territorial sea is in draft. The Department expects to consult on it in the summer, with a view to its coming into force later in the year.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in each of the last five years on *(a)* television, *(b)* poster, *(c)* radio, *(d)* newsprint and *(e)* other advertising. [61736]

Dr. Ladyman: Specific publicity costs are available only for the categories noted in the following table:

£000

	TV	*Radio*	*Press*	*Other*[1]
2001–02	1,603	726	1,773	1,926
2002–03	2,192	1,734	2,837	1,303
2003–04	4,674	997	2,295	2,211
2004–05	3,287	1,590	3,158	1,335
2005–06 (current forecast)[2]	4,724	1 ,494	919	1,130

[1] The other category includes online advertising and outdoor advertising i.e. buses, bill boards etc.

[2] The current forecast for 2005 includes 11 months actuals and one month's forecast.

Flight Paths

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many flight paths to major UK airports which serve international carriers take aeroplanes over built-up areas. [59793]

Derek Twigg: *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The Civil Aviation Authority only approves flight profiles that are safe and avoid over-flight of densely populated areas as far as is possible. However, flight profiles must be compatible with international route design requirements and this inevitably results in some over-flight of built-up areas by flights servicing major UK airports.

Greater Manchester PTE

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive on congestion charging in Greater Manchester. [62202]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 17 March 2006, *Official Report,* columns 2510W-11W given to the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Leech).

Level Crossings

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many incidents have been reported at level crossings in each of the last eight years in each police force area; [61282]

(2) how many *(a)* pedestrians, *(b)* road vehicle users, *(c)* train passengers and *(d)* other members of the public have been (i) injured and (ii) killed at level crossings in each police force area in each of the last eight years; [61283]

(3) how many level crossings there are in each police force area in England and Wales. [61406]

Derek Twigg: Details on the number of different types of level crossing and number of different types of incidents are given in the Health and Safety Executive's annual reports on rail safety, copies of which are in the House Library. Information on the number of different types of crossing is broken down into Network Rail's regional territories but information on incidents is given only for Great Britain. Neither HSE nor the rail industry record data by police force area.

Local Transport Plans

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent changes have been made to the formula for local transport plans; and if he will make a statement. [61741]

Dr. Ladyman: Following consultation, the Department is introducing a formula for the distribution of the Integrated Transport block progressively over five years from 2006–07. Details are published on the Department's website at http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/qroups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans 610731.pdf

M6

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* vehicles and *(b)* heavy goods vehicles travel between junctions 11A and 20 on the M6 on average each day in the last period for which figures are available. [61189]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table provides the average number of vehicles and heavy goods vehicles using the M6 on each weekday in 2005 for each junction to junction link between junction 11 A, north of Birmingham and junction 20, south of Warrington.

2005 Average 24 hour traffic flow

Location	*Monday*		*Tuesday*		*Wednesday*		*Thursday*	
	Flow	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*
J11AtoJ12	114,300	[illegible]	117,300	35,800	120,800	36,200	124,600	36,100
J12toJ13	117,600	32,400	121,000	36,400	124,400	35,500	128,000	36,500
J13toJ14	118,700	30,300	121,700	34,700	124,600	34,300	128,300	34,100
J14toJ15	112,000	28,500	114,600	32,100	117,100	32,200	120,900	32,000
J15toJ16	117,700	30,600	119,500	34,700	122,700	34,300	126,900	34,300
J16toJ17	121,300	33,100	123,400	35,300	126,800	36,400	129,500	36,100

2005 Average 24 hour traffic flow

Location	*Monday*		*Tuesday*		*Wednesday*		*Thursday*	
	Flow	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*
J17toJ18	125,900	33,600	128,500	37,500	132,100	37,200	136,000	37,500
J18toJ19	127,200	38,100	130,000	41,800	133,300	41,800	136,900	42,600
J19toJ20	108,700	28,000	110,600	31,600	113,700	32,000	116,800	31,300

Location	*Friday*		*Saturday*		*Sunday*	
	Flow	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*	*Flow*	*HGVs*
J11AtoJ12	129,100	31,600	94,300	13,200	101,500	10,600
J12toJ13	131,400	31,500	95,300	13,300	102,200	10,700
J13toJ14	131,500	30,200	94,200	12,700	101,000	9,500
J14toJ15	123,600	29,100	89,900	11,700	97,100	9,200
J15toJ16	130,100	30,600	92,600	12,100	100,200	9,000
J16toJ17	132,700	31,800	97,200	13,200	103,000	9,900
J17toJ18	139,000	33,300	100,200	13,500	107,100	10,300
J18toJ19	138,400	37,600	100,100	15,900	106,400	12,200
J19toJ20	119,400	27,800	82,900	11,400	88,900	8,700

Note:
Traffic Flows are combined flows ie both directions

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated delivery date was of the widening reported by the Midlands to Manchester multi-modal study. [61288]

Dr. Ladyman: The West Midlands to North West Multi-Modal Study report was published on 3 May 2002. A copy of this report was placed in the Library of both Houses at the time of publication. Chapter 7 of this report provides an implementation programme for the Study's recommendations.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of members of the principal civil service pension scheme in his Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45 years old. [61901]

Derek Twigg: As at 24 March 2006 there were 18,183 active members of the principal civil service pension scheme in the Department for Transport. The ages at which they joined the scheme are shown in the following table.

Age	*Number*
(a) Before 20	3,140
(b) 20 and before 25	4,043
(c) 25 and before 30	2,693
(d) 30 and before 35	2,116
(e) 35 and before 40	2,025
(f) 40 and before 45	1,860
(g) 45 and after	2,306

Public Transport

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures have been taken and how much has been allocated since 1997 to improve the safety of public transport in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland. [59741]

Derek Twigg: We do not hold the information sought in the form requested.

The Department continues to support the work of the police, local authorities and transport operators to tackle crime on public transport. We are developing, evaluating and disseminating good practice on reducing crime and the fear of crime wherever it occurs in the transport system. We have also introduced the secure stations scheme and launched the safer travel on buses and coaches panel. As Sponsor Department for the British Transport Police we have encouraged and assisted the force, through implementation of legislation and increased funding, to fulfil its responsibilities for policing the railways.

Railways

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries took place on railways in the North East in each of the last 10 years. [60371]

Derek Twigg: The Health and Safety Executive does not collect this data in the format requested. Statistics on fatalities and injuries for Great Britain for the last 10 years are published in HSE's railway safety annual reports, which are available in the House Library.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made in improving and renewing *(a)* track, *(b)* signalling, *(c)* station facilities and *(d)* other railway infrastructure in the Swansea area. [60804]

Derek Twigg: These are operational matters for Network Rail and I have asked them to reply directly to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what subsidy was given to *(a)* all train operating companies and *(b)* train operating companies running to and from Gloucestershire in each of the last five years for which figures are available; what he expects the subsidy to be in the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [56516]

Derek Twigg: Information about annual subsidies can be found in the 2005 SRA annual report, appendix 3.

Information requested about future subsidy is in the following table.

	2007	*2008*	*2009*
Thames Trains	n/a	n/a	n/a
First Great Western Link	n/a	n/a	n/a
First Great Western	94.6	42.7	10.8
Wales and West	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wessex Trains	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wales and Borders	n/a	n/a	n/a
Arriva Trains Wales	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Central Trains	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Virgin Crosscountry	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—

[1] From 1 April 2006 primary responsibility for the Arriva Trains Wales franchise passes to the National Assembly for Wales.

[2] The current Central Trains franchise expires on 31 March 2006. Discussions continue over future provision of services.

[3] Negotiations are continuing with Virgin Crosscountry over the level of subsidy it will receive in future years.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many penalty fares have been issued on trains in each of the last eight years, broken down by penalty fare scheme; [61193]

(2) how much money has been raised from penalty fares on trains in each of the last eight years, broken down by penalty fare scheme. [61197]

Derek Twigg: The information is not held by the Department.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which train operating companies lease trains from *(a)* Angel Trains Ltd. and *(b)* HSBC Rail UK Ltd.; and what the costs of such leasing were in 2004–05. [60803]

Derek Twigg: The information is as follows.

(a) The following franchised train operators lease rolling stock from Angel Trains Ltd.:

C2C
Central Trains
Chiltern Railways
First Great Western
First Great Western Link
GNER
London North Eastern Railways ('one')
Merseyrail
Midland Mainline
Northern Rail Ltd.
Scotrail
Silverlink
South Eastern Trains
South West Trains
TransPennine Express
Virgin West Coast
Wales & Borders
Wessex Trains
West Anglia & Great Northern

(b) The following franchisee! train operators lease rolling stock from HSBC Rail UK Ltd.:

Chiltern Railways
First Great Western
GNER
Island Line
London North Eastern Railways ('one')
Midland Mainline
New Southern Railway Ltd.
Scotrail
Silverlink
South Eastern Trains
TransPennine Express
West Anglia & Great Northern

Each year the rail industry pays over £1 billion to the Rolling Stock Operating Companies (ROSCOs) to lease stock (eg engines and carriages).

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what public consultation the Department undertook in designing the timetable to and from the West Country set out in the Greater Western Franchise. [60180]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 21 March 2006]:* The Strategic Rail Authority initiated public consultation on the Greater Western franchise on 2 June 2005, and consultation closed on 2 August 2005. 253 responses were received. The Department for Transport placed a report on the consultation on its website in October 2005.

Road Accidents

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* casualties and *(b)* fatalities on the roads were attributed to driving under the influence of (i) alcohol and (ii) drugs in each of the last five years. [62635]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimates for the number of fatalities and casualties in accidents involving illegal alcohol levels between 2000 and 2004 are published in table 2a in the Drinking and Driving article in "Road Casualties Great Britain—Annual Report". The report for 2004 was published on 29 September 2005 and a copy placed in the House of Commons Library.

The Department does not collect information on the number of casualties attributed to drivers under the influence of drugs, but I refer to the hon. Member to my answer of 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1726–77W.

Road Deaths

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of people killed in road accidents on roads maintained by local authorities in the last year for which figures are available. [62295]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of fatalities on local authority roads in personal injury road accidents in Great Britain in 2004 was 2,637.

Roads (Romford/Havering)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent on repairing roads in *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Havering in each of the last 10 years. [63004]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held centrally and would only be obtainable from the relevant local highway authorities, Essex county council and the London borough of Havering respectively.

School Run

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has held with local education authorities on the staggering of school opening times to ease traffic congestion arising from school transport. [62372]

Dr. Ladyman: The Secretary of State for Transport has not had any recent discussions with local education authorities on the staggering of school opening times to ease traffic congestion arising from school transport.

The Government believe that decisions regarding term dates and school opening times are best taken locally by those affected, and reflect the needs of parents, pupils and the local community. The school governing body decides when sessions should begin and end on each school day.

The joint Department for Transport and Department for Education and Skills "Travelling to School" project works with local authorities and schools to develop travel plans. The project encourages:

> schools to consider whether staggered school opening hours can allow pupils to access a wider range of school based activities; and
>
> local authorities to investigate whether they can broker staggered school opening times with groups of schools.

The project's objective is for local authorities to work with all schools to help them develop and implement school travel plans that meet local circumstances before the end of the decade.

Smartcard Technology

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has for the roll-out of smartcard technology for travel on *(a)* buses, *(b)* trams and *(c)* metro systems outside London. [62198]

Dr. Ladyman: In England, outside London, it is for local transport authorities, working with public transport operators, to decide whether to introduce smartcard technology on buses, trams and metro systems, in response to local needs and priorities.

Local Transport Planning Guidance stipulates that the Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation (ITSO) Specifications, which form part of the e-Government Unit e-Government Interoperability Framework GIF standards, shall be used for all procurements.

The ITSO Specifications—the national standards for ticketing systems—were published by the Department for Transport in March 2004.

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge have been accounted for by his Department in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61357]

Derek Twigg: The total amount of employers' accruing superannuation liability charge that has been accounted for by the Department since it was created in 2002 is:

	£000
2002–03	38,604
2003–04	44,757
2004–05	50,719
2005–06[1]	67,870

[1] Estimated.

Terrorism

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was made available to *(a)* prevent and *(b)* deal with terrorist attacks on UK ports and harbours in 2005–06. [59541]

Dr. Ladyman: The cost burden of maintaining secure ports and harbours falls mainly to industry. The lead for dealing with terrorist attacks when they occur in the UK lies with the Home Office, the police and other emergency services. The Department is unable to provide information on how much of their total provisions for 2005–06 was made available to prepare for terrorist attacks in the UK's ports and harbours. Within the Department, the Directorate of Transport Security and Civil Contingencies works closely with industry to ensure that the regulatory provisions for security that apply to ports and harbours are met. In 2005–06 the Directorate budgeted £1.7 million which includes the running costs for 34 staff who are mainly working to prevent terrorist attacks on maritime transport targets including our ports and harbours. Staff who are working on cross-cutting tasks within the Directorate also contribute to this effort.

Traffic Offences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from police forces proposing the introduction of a power to seize vehicles showing multiple traffic offences. [61274]

Dr. Ladyman: None. I am aware of a possible issue that was brought to my attention by the hon. Member for South-West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous) in the course of the Second Reading debate on the Road Safety Bill and which that hon. Member has since met me to discuss. I invited the head of ACPO roads policing to give me his views, which were to the effect that no new powers are required to deal with the issue. I am currently considering his advice.

Transport Statistics

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the passengers in excess of capacity figures were for each route on *(a)* rail and *(b)* metro services in each passenger transport authority area in each of the past eight years. [61126]

Derek Twigg: Figures for passengers in excess of capacity (PIXC) apply to weekday commuter trains arriving in London between 07:00 and 09:59 and those departing London between 16:00 and 18:59. The PIXC measure does not apply to rail and metro services within Passenger Transport Authorities in the UK and therefore such information cannot be provided, due to the disproportionate cost of resources required to extract this in the format requested.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the British Government has honoured agreements reached with farmers in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, regarding the payment of compensation in return for the eradication of poppy crops. [62477]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

No recent representations have been made by local community leaders in Helmand Province to the British embassy in Afghanistan regarding the non-payment of compensation for poppy eradication. However, I am aware of claims by the Senlis Council on this subject. As my right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary told the House on 27 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 529–31, the Senlis Council campaigns for the legalisation of opium production in Afghanistan on the grounds that it might be used for medicinal purposes. Neither the Government of Afghanistan nor the UK believe that legal cultivation would be viable in the present situation in Afghanistan.

The programme of compensated eradication in 2002 was led by the Afghan Transitional Authority who considered it appropriate to offer a one-off programme of payments to opium farmers on the basis that the poppy crop had been planted during the Taliban regime, before the current regime came to power. The UK provided financial assistance worth £21.25 million to support the new regime's commitment to tackle drugs production, but it was the responsibility of the Afghan authorities to administer the system of payments with farmers. The Government did not set up a bank account for this purpose. Compensated eradication was never seen as a long-term solution to drug control and does not form part of the present Afghan government's National Drug Control Strategy.

We are aware of reports that UK funds for compensated eradication may have been misused in the past. The Government take all reasonable measures to guard against fraud and financial irregularity in the use of public funds. All public expenditure, including that in respect of counter narcotics work in Afghanistan, is subject to the established scrutiny procedures of parliamentary committees and the National Audit Office.

Iraq

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent representations he has received from the Iraqi Government on UK aid. [62133]

Hilary Benn: During the last two and a half years, I have visited Iraq on four separate occasions and have had discussions with a wide range of Iraqi ministers and senior Government officials. My last visit to Baghdad and Basra was from 20 to 21 March. I met with Prime Minister Ja'afari, Foreign Minister Zebari, and talked to Planning Minister Barham Salih. During our discussions, they expressed appreciation of our continued support to Iraq's reconstruction. 2006 marks an important chapter in Iraq's development towards becoming a fully fledged democracy as well as taking the first, tough steps towards developing a strong, prosperous economy. The new Government needs to form quickly and effectively to take charge of the challenges ahead. We will discuss DFID's support programme in depth with the new Government when it comes into office.

The UK pledged £544 million for Iraq's reconstruction at the Madrid donors conference in October 2003. To date, over £510 million of this pledge has been disbursed. DFID continues to offer support to the Iraqi Government, to help:

reform their economy,

improve power and water services in the south,

develop open, accountable government systems that people can feel confidence in, and which promote the rule of law.

We are also providing support for Iraqi civil society organisations, to boost community participation in shaping their country's future. Our programme for 2005–06 (£65 million), has supported projects on water, electricity, supporting participation in the political process, support to the centre of government, and capacity building in local government. We expect to spend another £45 million in 2006–07.

Medicinal Aid

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on medicinal aid to developing countries since 1997. [61786]

Mr. Thomas: It is difficult to quantify the specific UK spend on medicines since 1997 due to the rapid changes over this period in how DFID finances health. Increasingly DFID contributes to pooled funds with other partners or provides untied funds into the health sector budget or contributes to the general budget of a country. The procurement of medicines is carried out directly by recipient governments or by the recipients of UK funds.

The UK Government are a major donor to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) and has committed £359 million through to 2008. Almost half of the GFATM funds are used to procure drugs and medical supplies. The UK also provides substantial support to other global health initiatives such as the

Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), Roll Back Malaria and Stop TB, and to UN agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), all of which procure medicines and/or vaccines.

In September 2005, the UK launched, with other donors, the International Financing Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm). This will provide $4 billion over a 10-year period to support the purchase of vaccines by developing countries and the strengthening of immunisation systems.

The United Kingdom (UK) Government are committed to improving access to essential medicines in developing countries. In general, DFID spends money on efforts to, strengthen national medicine systems; ensuring affordable pricing and sustainable financing, reliable health services and the rational selection and use of drugs, rather than buying medicines specifically.

Since 1997, DFID has spent over £1.5 billion to support the development of health systems in poor countries. Specific initiatives related to medicines include providing £39 million to support the Nigeria Partnership for Transforming Health Systems and £3.6 million to the South African Drug Action programme which has increased the number of health care centres that use approved lists of essential medicines. DFID has provided support to the WHO to appoint national professional officers for essential medicines in 11 African countries, to provide technical assistance on supply, management and rational use of medicines.

Middle East

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will make a statement on the G8 aid pledged to the Palestinians in the light of the recent Palestinian elections; [61860]

(2) what assessment he has made of the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to administer funds pledged by the G8 and EU. [61862]

Hilary Benn: The agreement reached at the G8 summit was to support the Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement, Mr. James Wolfensohn, in his intention to stimulate a global financial contribution of up to $3 billion per year over the coming three years. However, this was based on a recognition that certain conditions need to be in place for additional aid to be effective, notably on movement and access to markets for Palestinians.

An agreement reached on November 15, 2005, between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on movement and access would, if implemented, meet several of those conditions. So far this agreement has not been fully implemented.

Following the recent Palestinian elections in which Hamas won an absolute majority further assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is under review. The Quartet, comprising the European Union, the United States, the United Nations and Russia has said that aid to the future Palestinian Government will depend on it giving up violence, recognising Israel's right to exist and signing up to previous peace agreements.

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to help the Palestinian Authority establish rule of law in the Palestinian Territories. [61861]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provided funding, training, management support and equipment for the EU co-ordinating office for the Palestinian Police Support (EU COPPS). The EU COPPS has helped to co-ordinate donor assistance to the police and played an important role in the run up to and during the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Advisers from the EU COPPS have been working closely with the Palestinian police force to support organisational reform. This reform is aimed at a more effective, accountable and efficient police force.

Since 1 January 2006, the EU COPPS became an EU policing mission under the European Security and Defence Policy.

Future DFID assistance will depend on the new Palestinian Government's commitment to the principles outlined in the statement of 30 January by the Quartet of the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations.

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what monitoring is being put in place to ensure that development funding for the Palestinians does not go to Hamas. [61863]

Hilary Benn: Aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA) is being reviewed against its commitment to the quartet principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and commitment to the peace process. We hope that the new PA will comply with these conditions, in which case funding will continue. If they do not comply, we will look carefully at other options for helping the Palestinian people. This will not include projects where there is a risk of aid being diverted to funding Hamas. The UK Government will not allow taxpayers' money to be used to fund terrorism, terrorist organisations or anything other than poverty reduction.

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the merits of using non-governmental organisation funding as a means of sustaining international aid to the Palestinians. [61864]

Hilary Benn: Non-governmental organisations play a vital role in meeting the needs of some Palestinians and holding the Palestinian Authority (PA) to account. However, they do not have the capacity to substitute for an effective PA. DFID has international experience of helping governments to deliver essential services. This is our preferred way of working and, in the past, we have put much of our aid through the PA.

Following the recent Palestinian elections, however! aid to the Hamas-led PA is being reviewed against its commitment to the Quartet principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel and commitment to the peace process. We hope that the new PA will comply with these conditions, in which case funding will continue. If it does not comply we will look carefully at other options for helping the Palestinian people. However, for the time being, it is too early to say which options would be most suitable.

Nepal

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 27 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 626W, on Nepal, whether a company has been appointed as management contractor; and what the contractor's responsibilities will be. [62461]

Hilary Benn: The Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Management Support Committee invited bids from international water utility companies for the job of Management Contractor. DFID understands that Severn Trent Water International Ltd, a UK based company, was the only bidder and that the Evaluation Committee, consisting of relevant Government representatives, is evaluating the bid.

The Management Contractor will be required to assist the newly formed Water Utility Operator company. The company will assume responsibility for managing the water supply system of the Kathmandu Valley from around July 2006.

Oil Pipelines

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria his Department uses in deciding whether to fund oil pipeline projects in developing countries. [62474]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's involvement with oil pipeline projects in developing countries is an indirect one; as a 'shareholder' in multilateral financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks, which invest in projects in this sector, DFID does not fund oil pipeline projects directly.

As part of DFID's responsibilities in this 'shareholder' role, DFID monitors developments in the oil, gas and minerals sectors. This work focuses on the general principles adopted in the environmental and social policies and procedures of the multilateral banks because these provide the framework within which the environmental, social and economic impacts of specific projects are managed 'on the ground'.

For example, DFID has been actively engaged in the Extractive Industries Review, which assessed the compatibility of the World Bank's investments in the sector with their mission of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

More recently, DFID has also contributed to the International Finance Corporation's review of its environmental and social safeguards policies and procedures—key tools in ensuring the prudent management of the exploitation of natural resources in developing countries.

Peru

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of *(a)* poverty and *(b)* income levels in Peru. [62143]

Mr. Thomas: DFID keeps informed about poverty and income levels in Peru through its regional Andean office, based in La Paz Bolivia. Currently, national poverty rates put total poverty (moderate and extreme) at 54.7 per cent., and extreme poverty at 21.5 per cent. of the population[1]. Average household income is estimated at 317 Nuevo Soles per person per month (just under US$100). Inequality in Peru is a grave problem and poverty is much higher in rural areas, where total poverty is 76.4 per cent. and extreme poverty 45.6 per cent., versus 43.0 per cent. and 8.5 per cent. for urban areas.

There have been some improvements in the country-wide situation during recent years. Between 2001 and 2003, overall poverty remained the same, but extreme poverty fell slightly from 24.2 per cent. Additionally, since the mid-1990s, housing conditions have improved—for example, the percentage of the population with access to improved sanitation rose from 50.3 per cent. in 1995 to 57.0 per cent. in 2002. Urban youth unemployment in young people has fallen slightly, from 14.3 per cent. to 12.4 per cent. in the same period.[2]

[1] Statistic in this submission are based on household income data collected by the National Institute of Statistics and Information.

[2] http://www.eqxis-bid.org/AtAGlance/PeruTR.pdf.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of members of the Principal Civil Service pension scheme in his Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45 years old. [62001]

Mr. Thomas: As at 29 March 2006, there were 1,904 active members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in the Department for International Development. The ages at which they joined the scheme are shown in the table.

Age	*Number*
(a) before 20	126
(b) 20 and before 25	338
(c) 25 and before 30	393
(d) 30 and before 35	324
(e) 35 and before 40	264
(f) 40 and before 45	220
(g) 45 and after	239

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has been accounted for by his Department in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61358]

Mr. Thomas: In the Department for International Development, the amount of employers' accruing superannuation liability charges in respect of members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in the last five years is as follows:

	£ million
2004–05[1]	8.506
2003–04[1]	7.673
2002–03[1]	6.803
2001–02	5.860
2000–01	5.526

[1] From 1 October 2002, new entrants have been able to opt for a partnership pension partnership account, a stakeholder arrangement with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions to partnership pension accounts are not included in the figures.

Uruguay

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to assist Uruguay to diversify its trade. [62155]

Mr. Thomas: As a middle income country, Uruguay receives a relatively low share of international development assistance. DFID does not provide direct bilateral assistance to Uruguay. DFID's main financial contribution to Latin America is through the UK's contributions to multi-lateral organisations such as the European Commission (EC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the World Bank, whose programmes include support to Uruguay's development.

The EC's present country strategy paper (2001 to 2006) for Uruguay, with indicative funding of €18.6 million, includes an €8.4 million (45 per cent.) component for economic reform. This is aimed particularly at helping Uruguay to diversify its industrial base beyond the production and export of commodities. Furthermore, the Commission is continuing to negotiate with Mercosur, of which Uruguay is a member, for a new EU-Mercosur free trade agreement. If successfully achieved, such an agreement, with appropriate complementary policy measures in place, could be expected to contribute to Uruguay's trade diversification.

The World Bank's country assistance strategy for Uruguay, which projects assistance of up to US$800 million between 2005 and 2010, includes the promotion of sustained and broad-based growth. New loan projects, such as a $70 million project to upgrade the country's transport infrastructure, can be expected to help facilitate access to markets and diversification of economic activity.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) country strategy for Uruguay (2005 to 2009) includes the objective of enhancing the regional and international competitiveness of national outputs and promoting private sector investment. Within this, the strategy aims to strengthen Uruguay's access to export markets and the internationalisation of its business and industry.

As part of its regional assistance plan for Latin America, DFID is also providing £7.5 million over four years (2005 to 2009) to strengthen the effectiveness of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in reducing poverty in Latin America through activities related to markets and international trade. While aimed primarily at those countries in the region with lower incomes and greater poverty, the programme could bring benefits to Uruguay in terms of the improved effectiveness and operations of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Departmental Staff

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality how many and what proportion of *(a)* staff and *(b)* new staff employed in her office in each of the last three years for which data are available were registered as disabled. [61387]

Meg Munn: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of staff in departments who have declared a disability. Declaration of a disability is voluntary.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Libraries of the House and on the civil service website at the following addresses: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/publications/xls/disability.apr04_4nov04.xls for data relating to 1 April 2004, and http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/archive/index.asp for previous reporting periods.

Information on staff in individual offices is not available.

Pay Discrepancies

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what recent representations she has received on discrepancies in pay received by men and women. [60743]

Meg Munn: The Women and Work Commission presented their final report 'Shaping a Fairer Future' to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 27 February 2006. I was pleased to see their findings and recommendations to close the gender pay and opportunities gap. The Government are determined to take action to address all causes of the pay gap highlighted in the Women and Work Commission report and will issue an action plan within six months. The Commission will come together again in one year to receive a report into progress on the recommendations and to comment on their effectiveness.

Prostitutes (Tolerance Zones)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with the Home Secretary on the merits of introducing tolerance zones for prostitutes. [60770]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* As a member of the Ministerial Group on Sexual Offending, I work closely with Home Office colleagues to ensure that the work of the group, which includes prostitution, addresses women's needs. I was actively involved in the launch of the prostitution strategy on 17 January, together with a number of colleagues across Government, which reflects how seriously we are taking this issue.

The Government have looked very carefully at managed areas, and the recent prostitution consultation document, "Paying the Price", specifically invited comment on this option.

There is no real evidence that formal managed areas can deliver what we want in terms of improving the safety of those involved in prostitution, and improving the safety and quality of life within those communities affected. We are committed to listening to the concerns of the community, which has a significant part to play in the development of an effective local response to prostitution.

Women (Trafficking)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with the Home Secretary on *(a)* the number of women brought into the United Kingdom to be sold into the vice trade and *(b)* improving the support and assistance for such women who agree to help the authorities in a prosecution case against those who trafficked them. [60769]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 27 March 2006]:* As a member of the Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking, I work closely with Home Office colleagues to ensure that provision for victims is sensitive to women's needs.

We do not have the evidence base to enable us to estimate the number of trafficking victims brought into the UK to be sold into the vice trade. We are seeking more evidence of all human trafficking, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, as part of our current consultation on the proposed UK Action Plan on human trafficking. In that consultation, we state that we will publish research into the harm caused by organised immigration crime, including trafficking. This research will provide a better understanding of the trafficking problem faced in the UK and will be updated annually. This year we will commence a scoping exercise focused on trafficking and the off-street prostitution market.

The UK recognises the needs of victims of trafficking and the POPPY scheme already provides a supporting and protective environment in which victims can receive care and support while deciding whether to assist the authorities. We propose to increase the geographical coverage of support services for victims and introduce support at varying levels of intensity according to individual need. We will also use the evaluation of the POPPY scheme and the responses to the consultation on the UK Action Plan to inform our decisions on the nature and scope of future support.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Belvedere Incinerator

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to announce his decision on the proposed Belvedere waste to energy incinerator; and if he will make a statement. [62447]

Malcolm Wicks: I intend announcing the decision shortly.

Carbon Energy Reserves

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what reserves of *(a)* natural gas, *(b)* oil and *(c)* coal the UK has. [62141]

Malcolm Wicks: Estimate of UK oil and gas reserves are published annually on the DTI's Oil and Gas website at:

http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/information/bb_updates/chapters/reserves_index.htm.

The Coal Authority estimates reserves at operating and developing mines in the UK to be between 500 and 600 million tonnes. There is no accurate estimate of what further reserves may become accessible from any future mining development beyond that already in prospect. Total coal deposits (in seams over 0.6m thick and less than 1,200m deep) have been estimated in the order of 190 billion tonnes, although much of this is unlikely to be technically or economically exploitable.

Correspondence

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Salisbury, of 18 August 2005, about Mr. Chris Knight of Craze Brothers Ltd. in Salisbury. [58728]

Alan Johnson: I apologise for the extremely long delay in responding to the hon. Member's letter. This was due to administrative error and a reply will be sent shortly.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Leominster (Bill Wiggin), of 3 February 2006 on behalf of Mr. Beach, a constituent of the hon. Member. [62049]

Alan Johnson: I regret the delay in responding to the hon. Member's letter of 3 February 2006.

My Department is seeking further information on the issues Mr. Beach has raised and I will reply as soon as possible.

Cyber Crime

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the action to be taken by the Serious Organised Crime Agency to combat international cyber crime. [62317]

Alun Michael: I understand, that the Serious Organised Crime Agency will have a significantly stronger cyber crime function than that of its precursor agencies. Officials in my Department work closely with their colleagues in the Home Office, and have worked closely with the Agency's precursor units on how best to prevent cyber crime.

Easter Act

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to implement the principal provision of the Easter Act 1928; and why the Government has not implemented the provision since 1997. [61807]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have no plans to implement the Easter Act 1928. It remains on the Statute Book but the Act requires that before a draft order is laid before Parliament

> "regard shall be had to any opinion officially expressed by any Church or other Christian Body."

At this time, the churches have not all expressed a desire or willingness to move to a fixed Easter.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60341]

Alan Johnson: DTI are working toward achieving the energy efficiency targets expressed in the Government framework for sustainable development, Part E—Energy. The targets set are to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings on the estate by 15 per cent. in terms of KWH usage and that used per square metre by 2010–11.

The DTI London HQ estate is being reduced by approximately 30 per cent. as the result of a major rationalisation programme to make more efficient use of our accommodation with significant associated reductions in the Department's overall energy usage.

The Department has implemented a number of energy efficiency initiatives since the target was published. The main strategy is to gain efficiencies as a result of the estate strategy to reduce the physical size of the estate and the number of buildings. We have also included a number of energy efficiency projects in our main buildings to improve lighting and environmental controls as well as occupant awareness. We have also commissioned a feasibility study through the Carbon Trust to look at the potential for micro generation on the remaining DTI buildings.

Equal Opportunities Commission

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons he has reduced the budget of the Equal Opportunities Commission. [63102]

Meg Munn: The budget for the EOC for 2006–07 has not yet been finalised. The budgets for EOC, as with all programmes, have not yet been agreed. It is currently expected that some additional one-off funding baseline will again be given.

An indicative resource budget for 2006–07 was given to the EOC in February 2005. Over recent weeks there have been further discussions with the EOC around agreeing their resource budget for the coming year but it has not been possible to issue formal allocation letters before finalisation of the overall DTI budget for the year.

All DTI budgets are currently being finalised in a very touch public expenditure climate.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget is for the Equal Opportunities Commission for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [63103]

Meg Munn: The resource budget allocation for the EOC for 2005–06 is £9.75 million. This is made up of a baseline funding of £8.005 million plus and additional DTI funding of £1.7 million including £500,000 for the gender duty giving a total of £9.75 million.

The 2006–07 budgets for EOC, as with all programmes, have not yet been finalised.

Euro

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has in place for the introduction of the euro. [60902]

Alan Johnson: The Department of Trade and Industry prepared a Managed Transition Plan for any introduction of the euro in December 2004. This would be required if Government, Parliament and the people, in a referendum, all agreed that joining the euro would be the right thing to do.

Financial Irregularities

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases of financial irregularities have been recorded in his Department in each of the last five financial years; and if he will make a statement. [57545]

Alan Johnson: The financial irregularities identified in Department of Trade and Industry are featured in the annual returns to Treasury on Frauds and Thefts. Records are only available for the last 4 financial years for which fraud returns have been completed.

The details are as follows:

	Number of cases	*Total value (£)*
2000–01	6	11,000
2002–03	3	14,000
2003–04	—	—
2004-05	4	44,000

These sums are cases involving established internal misconduct or where, if it has not been possible to identify the perpetrator, it has been assumed that there was internal involvement. These figures do not include details of straightforward theft of minor assets.

Global Nuclear Energy Partnership

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects his Department to announce its response to the strategy set out in the United States Global Nuclear Energy Partnership proposals. [63070]

Malcolm Wicks: The United Kingdom is discussing, with the United States, the development of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. There have been bi-lateral meetings between the United Kingdom and the United States to discuss the American proposals. However, this proposed programme is at very early stage and there is no need for, nor timetable for, an announcement at this point.

India

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the level of UK trade with India. [61791]

Ian Pearson: UK Exports to India show a 27.4 per cent. increase to November 2005 compared to the same period in 2004.

UK imports from India increased by 20.1 per cent. to November 2005, compared to the same period in 2004.

The Total Trade with India to December 2004 was £6.4 billion (2005 figures will be released in July 2006).

The UK is the 5th biggest investor in India with UK companies involved in 9.8 per cent. of all new FDI into India since 1991.

Indian investment into the UK is growing rapidly when measured in terms of investment projects and jobs created. Up to 31 December 2005 UKTI had assisted 33 Indian companies invest in the UK (up 22 per cent. on 2004).

As the Indian economy continues to grow, it is vital that businesses in UK seize the opportunities on offer. The Government will increase its effort to support British business to access the Indian market.

Lead Organ Pipes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure that on *(a)* the restriction of hazardous substances (2002 95/EC) and *(b)* waste electrical and electronic equipment (2002 96/EC) prohibiting the use of lead in component manufacture do not adversely affect the organ building and repair industry. [61801]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department of Trade and Industry continues to work closely with the European Commission, other member states and industry on the RoHS and WEEE directives.

The repair and refurbishment of existing pipe organs (both now and in the future) will not be affected; neither will pipe organs that are not reliant on electricity to function. A total exemption for the manufacture of new pipe organs from the substances restrictions of the RoHS directive would require a formal application by the industry to the European Commission (under article 5.1b). The Department has offered to work with the industry to help them develop such a case.

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment on pipe organ *(a)* building and *(b)* maintenance; and if he will make a statement. [61296]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no impact on pipe organ building or maintenance arising from the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the impact of EU legislation on lead pipe organs; and if he will make a statement. [62394]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received a number of e-mails and letters as part of a campaign originated by the Institute of British Organ Building (IBO). DTI officials have been working with the IBO and met with them recently.

Low Carbon Building Programme

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date householders will be able to submit grant applications to his Department's Low Carbon Buildings Programme. [60995]

Malcolm Wicks: Householders will be able to access the Low Carbon Buildings Programme website from 3 April to find out details on how to apply for grants:

www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the amount of capital grant support which will be spent on solar photovoltaics in the first year of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. [60996]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Ainsworth) on 22 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 392W.

Manufacturing

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to promote the manufacturing industry in the North East. [61134]

Alun Michael: The importance of manufacturing to the North East of England, and to the whole UK economy, is reflected in the Department of Trade and Industry's Manufacturing Strategy. Launched in 2002, the strategy sets out the actions needed to create a high value, high skill manufacturing sector capable of introducing new products and processes into our economy, creating new markets, and delivering a huge boost to our prosperity. In response to the strategy, and the subsequent review in 2004, we have:

Established the Manufacturing Forum to ensure the effective implementation and evolution of the Manufacturing Strategy. This sets out priority areas for targeted action, bringing together Government, industry, trade unions, Regional Development Agencies, and other stakeholders to support manufacturing.

Set up the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) to give manufacturers in every region direct access to practical advice and support from manufacturing experts. Since its establishment in 2002 the MAS has generated over £12 million in value-added for manufacturing firms in the North East of England alone.

Set up innovation and growth teams to plan how the UK can best respond to the competitive challenges that key UK industries, such as automotive, aerospace, chemicals and materials, will face in the future.

Built on the UK's world class science base, and strengthened links between higher education and industry. The science budget has more than doubled from £1.3 billion in 1997. This will rise to £3.4 billion in 2007–08, enabling businesses gain competitive advantage by drawing on a strong science base.

Launched the Technology Programme to support research and development in key new and emerging technologies.

Extended the scope of R&D Tax Credits, encouraging manufacturers to invest in R&D.

Put in place a network of Sector Skills Councils to ensure industry gets the skills it needs, and strengthened Apprenticeships by introducing a structure that is more responsive to employers' needs.

Supported investment through changes to Corporation Tax and Capital Gains Tax, through the Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme, and through programmes such as Selective Finance for Investment in England (previously Regional Selective Assistance), Grant for Research and Development, and new regional venture capital funds.

Regional Development Agency, ONE NorthEast, administers the Selective Finance for Investment in England (SFIE), and Grant for Research and Development schemes in the region on behalf of DTI. Total spend (in £ million) since 2002 on these schemes in the North East of England is set out in the following table.

	Total spend (£ million)	
	SFIE	*Grant for R & D*
2002–03	11.90	1.22
2003–04	18.13	1.47
2004–05	19.53	1.54
2005–06	14.64	1.23

Source:
ONE North East)

In addition, ONE NorthEast's North East Productivity Alliance (NEPA) has successfully assisted a large number of manufacturing companies to gain from enhanced engineering expertise, leading to significant productivity improvements.

The Department of Trade and Industry also provides funding through a wide number of schemes, initiatives and collaborative programmes of direct and indirect benefit to the manufacturing sector in the North East of England, including:

Commitment of £7.2 million funding to ONE NorthEast under its University Innovation Centre (UIC) programme in 2002 to fund the North East UIC in Nanotechnology—a consortium of the five regional universities, in association with industrial partners;

Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF, jointly funded by DTI and DfES) allocation of £13 million through HEEF1 (2002–04) and HEIF2 (2004–06) to the North East's universities for projects benefiting business and the community;

Support for the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI), the Wilton-based centre of excellence.

In addition to the specific initiatives mentioned, measures to streamline business support, ensure better business regulation, open up international markets, provide support for exporters, build flexible labour markets, foster science and innovation, deliver secure and sustainable energy, encourage knowledge transfer, support the implementation of best practice, and reform company law, are currently being pursued. These measures—along with providing strong economic stability through low inflation, low interest rates and low unemployment—will benefit all business sectors, and will allow manufacturing businesses across the North East of England to plan and invest with confidence for the long term.

Micro Renewables

Andrew Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on jobs and investment in the UK's micro renewables sector of his Department's decision to end annual grant support to micro renewable customers from 2006 to 2009; and if he will make a statement. [61678]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department will continue to fund the micro renewables sector between 2006 to 2009 through a new Low Carbon Buildings programme, which will continue to offer grants for the installation of renewable technologies. The original budget of £30 million was also increased in the Budget 2006 with an additional £50 million.

Our longer-term commitment to this sector is demonstrated through our microgeneration strategy, which was launched on the 29 March.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the occasions on which the Minister of State for Energy has met *(a)* the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management and *(b)* British Energy in the last 12 months. [60904]

Malcolm Wicks: I have met Gordon McKerron once in his capacity as chairman of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management during the last 12 months.

I have met with British Energy once in the last 12 months. This was as part of the Department's formal monitoring arrangements that it has put in place following the company's restructuring in 2005.

Natural Gas

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications of the capping of natural gas prices in *(a)* Russia and *(b)* China. [62136]

Malcolm Wicks: International gas market issues are important elements of the UK's approach to energy security as set out in the document "UK International Priorities-The Energy Strategy" produced jointly by Department of Trade and Industry, FCO and DEFRA. It is available online at:

http://www.fco.gov.uk/selet/Front?PagenameOpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&cPage&cidl107298279424

The strategy recognises that low (or capped) gas prices in Russia (and by implication China) deter investors from building new capacity in production and infrastructure and reduce incentives for energy efficiency. DTI, FCO and DEFRA will continue to assess the implications to UK energy security in the context of all the issues identified in the strategy.

Non-fossil Fuel and Renewables Obligations

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration his Department has given to extending the Renewables Obligation beyond 2027. [63069]

Malcolm Wicks: The Renewables Obligation (RO) will remain in place until 2027 to ensure investor confidence in the long-term. Although the Government is not currently considering extending the RO beyond 2027 the RO will continue to be monitored to ensure investor confidence is maintained.

Post Offices

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of *(a)* post office services in rural areas and *(b)* the rural network. [59010]

Barry Gardiner: The Government have made available up to £300 million to support the non-commercial part of the rural post office network until 2008. In addition, Post Office Ltd. has published its report on the findings of its trials of new, innovative and cost-effective ways of delivering post office services to rural communities.

This report will help stakeholders and customers to understand better the range of delivery options being tested by Post Office Ltd. and will make an important contribution to the wider consideration and ongoing discussions about the most effective way to deliver post office services in the 21st century. For that reason the no avoidable closures policy for rural post offices has been extended until the Autumn.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many sub-post offices have closed in the West Midlands since 1997. [61789]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for the Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook, the Managing Director has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of members of the principal civil service pension scheme in his Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45 years old. [61997]

Alan Johnson: As at 28 February 2006 there were 9,449 active members of the principal civil service pension scheme in the Department (including DTI Executive Agencies). The ages at which they joined the scheme are shown in the following table.

Age	*Number*
(a) before 20	1,720
(b) 20 and before 25	2,761
(c) 25 and before 30	1,667
(d) 30 and before 35	941
(e) 35 and before 40	718
(f) 40 and before 45	852
(g) 45 and after	790

Private Office

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of his private office and that of his predecessors as Secretary of State in each year since 1997. [60908]

Alan Johnson: The figures showing the cost of my private office for 1997 to 2000 are held on an old accounting system and are not readily available.

The cost of my private office for the financial years 2000 to 2005 were:

	£000
2000–01	424
2001–02	415
2002–03	402
2003–04	436
2004–05	409

Note:
The figures for 2005–06 are not available.

Queen's Awards

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1652–3W, on Queen's Awards, who the members were of the three panels of judges for the three Queen's Awards categories for *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [59348]

Alan Johnson: Existing members of the Panel of Judges (junior selection committees), that represent the three separate categories of Business Award (for International Trade, Innovation, and Sustainable Development), who also served on the 2004 and 2005 Panels, are deliberately excluded from the public domain to avoid direct lobbying of panel members.

Those Members of the 2004 and 2005 Panel of Judges who have since departed, are listed as follows:

Innovation

Sir Robin Young KCB (Chairman)
Permanent Secretary
Department of Trade & Industry

Roy Collins
Deputy Director
Electrical Technology (EIBU)
Department of Trade & Industry

Shaun Gallagher
Industry Branch
Department of Health

Sustainable Development

Sir Brian Bender KCB (Chairman)
Permanent Secretary
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Jonathan Startup
Director, Sustainable Development
Department of Trade & Industry

Professor Tim O'Riordan
School of Environmental Sciences
University of East Anglia

Dr. David Lynn
Director of Science & Innovation
Natural Environment Research Council

Professor Paul Ekins
Head of Environment Group
Policy Studies Institute

International Trade

Paul Barron CBE
Chief Executive
National Air Traffic Services Ltd.

Kirit Pathak QBE
Chairman & Chief Executive
Patak's Foods Ltd.
Sir David Brown
Chairman
Motorola UK
Jacky Stevens
Chief Executive
Business Link Wessex
Sir Peter Mason KBE
Group Chief Executive
AMEC PLC
Derek Mapp
Chairman
East Midlands Development Agency
Philippa Allan
Stone the Crows!
Peter Mathews CMG
Black Country Metals Ltd.
Arun Singh QBE
Stuart Doughty
Chief Executive
Costain Group PLC

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice he has issued to his Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54185]

Alan Johnson: The Department will fly the Union flag on 21 April in honour of Her Majesty's 80th birthday. No instructions have been issued to executive agencies on how they might wish to mark the Queen's birthday.

Research and Development

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial assistance his Department is giving to research and development for industry in *(a)* Coventry, South and *(b)* the West Midlands Region. [61754]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 29 March 2006]*: In financial year 2005–06, Advantage West Midlands offered a total of £185,056 to four companies in Coventry South under the DTI's Research and Development Grant Scheme, which is designed to help individuals and small and medium-sized businesses research and develop technologically innovative products and processes. The corresponding figures for the West Midlands are £1,607,871 being offered to 19 companies.

Advantage West Midlands also contributed 332.6 million towards the £70 million Premium Auto Research and Development Program (PARD) at the University of Warwick.

PARD assists companies involved in supplying to the luxury car industry and is also supported by partner companies including Jaguar and Land Rover. It allows companies who would not normally be able to invest heavily in research and development to use the cutting-edge facilities at the Warwick Manufacturing Group, ensuring West Midlands firms gain access to the highest level of skills and technology. Since being launched in 2003, projects have covered areas such advanced body joining techniques, characterisation of new vehicle materials, crash analysis and the exploitation of IT technologies.

CovPress, a company based in Coventry South, is one of the 200 companies that have benefited from PARD to improve their productivity. Through PARD, the company has been able to tackle a series of production issues at their plant and develop increasingly sophisticated body parts.

Royal Mail

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether all outgoing post from his Department is sent using the Royal Mail; and what criteria his Department uses to determine postal arrangements. [59753]

Alan Johnson: The more specialist requirements for external mail are already subject to competitive tender in the DTI and intergovernmental mail is handled by the normal interdepartmental service (IDS) run by Cabinet Office. We continue to use Royal Mail for other first and second class mail and we have no current plans to change any of these arrangements.

Russia

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the level of UK trade with Russia. [61792]

Ian Pearson: Bilateral trade with Russia rose to over £7 billion last year. UK exports to Russia rose to £1.9 billion and UK imports from Russia to £5.2 billion in a wide range of sectors a year on year increase of 27 per cent. for exports and 47 per cent. for imports.

Sexual Offences

Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Trade and Industry how many cases of sexual harassment were brought in which the defendant was subsequently acquitted of all charges in England and Wales, in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* criminal justice area and *(b)* region. [61891]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In 2004–05 a total of 777 sex discrimination cases were dismissed at a hearing by an Employment Tribunal. The Employment Tribunals Service does not record which of these cases specifically relate to sexual harassment.

Single European Currency

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the costs to his Department of the introduction of the euro. [60900]

Alan Johnson: There is no current estimate of the cost to DTI of an introduction of the euro.

A high-level, and partial, estimate of the cost for head office, agencies and the executive non-departmental public bodies if the euro were to be introduced into the UK, made in November 2004, was £5.4 million. It is difficult to arrive at a more accurate and current estimate as that would depend very much on the timing and approach taken. In particular, we expect more IT systems to be euro compatible as a result of ongoing modernisation programmes, which would reduce the costs of any euro changeover.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was allocated to tackling social exclusion by his Department in 2006–07; and from which budgets. [56196]

Alan Johnson: A large number of DTI's activities have a contribution to make in tackling social exclusion, but neither DTI's objectives nor its spending programmes are constructed in a way which distinguishes this element from the other outcomes which its public services agreements are intended to achieve.

Television Sets

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many television sets are in operation in the Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in Ministers' private offices and *(c)* in each building in the Department; and how many television licences are held by the Department. [62809]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not keep a central record of televisions in use in its buildings but there is one in each Ministers' office and approximately a further 30 in our main HQ building at 1 Victoria Street including those for training purposes using video input. All televisions in DTI buildings are used in connection with official business and are therefore not subject to licensing.

Wind Farms

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many wind farms there are in England; and how many are planned to be built in the next four years. [62489]

Malcolm Wicks: The following table gives an overview of the number of wind farms in England that are either operational, currently under construction, consented, or in the planning stage. However, not all wind farms are likely to get planning permission or be built.

Status	*Number of onshore wind farms*	*Number of offshore wind farms*	*Total number of wind farms*	*Total capacity (MW)*
Operational	49	3	52	365
Currently under construction	8	1	9	201.5
Consented	34	5	39	988
Planning	43	6	49	3,541

Source:
The British Wind Energy Association website: www.bwea.org

WALES

Council Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 895W, on council tax, how many photographs of domestic properties were taken by the Valuation Office Agency during the council tax revaluation in Wales. [62216]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1640W.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to his Answer of 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1640W, on council tax, whether the Valuation Office Agency took photographs of domestic properties for the council tax revaluation in Wales. [62234]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer my hon. Friend gave to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 894W.

Police Restructuring

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library his letter to the Home Office on the proposed police reorganisation in Wales. [62697]

Mr. Hain: I have today placed in the Library a copy of my letter of 12 December on the proposed police reorganisation in Wales.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of members of the principal civil service pension scheme in his Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45 years old. [61905]

Mr. Hain: Wales Office staff come from other Government Departments and bodies (including the National Assembly for Wales and the Department for Constitutional Affairs). Pensions information is held by the home Department, and is not held by the Wales Office.

Gathering this information for Wales Office staff could only be done at disproportionate cost.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of illegally armed groups in Afghanistan. [62054]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1042, to the right hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Michael Ancram).

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the source of Taliban *(a)* funding and *(b)* weaponry. [62114]

John Reid: The Taliban primarily obtain funding from within Afghanistan and Pakistan, supplemented to a lesser degree from sources elsewhere. We believe that the Taliban also indirectly benefit from the narcotics trade in Afghanistan. Most Taliban weaponry is sourced from within Afghanistan or comes from or comes through or from sources within Pakistan.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the procedural requirements are for the transfer of a prisoner detained by UK forces in Afghanistan to the Afghan authorities. [62223]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) on the 20 and 24 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1648 W and 1982W respectively and the hon. Member for Woodspring (Dr. Fox) on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 38W.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps are being taken by the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan to achieve a secure operating environment for non-governmental organisations. [62225]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Harper) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 3W. Further information on the role of provisional reconstruction teams which covers the contribution of other members of ISAF is available on the ISAF website at:

http://www.afnorth.nato.int/ISAF/Backgrounders/BackPRT.htm

C130 Aircraft

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the circumstances were of each incident of C130 aircraft being hit by hostile fire in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [61143]

Mr. Ingram: There were no incidents of RAF C130 aircraft being hit by hostile fire in 2003.

In 2004 there were three incidents of RAF C130 aircraft being hit by hostile fire.

On 11 April 2004, a C130K aircraft travelled en route from Baghdad International airport to Balad. On inspection of the aircraft at Balad, it was found that a projectile had hit the upper fuselage. The aircraft was deemed serviceable and was able to continue its mission.

On 1 May 2004, an inspection of a C130K aircraft at Baghdad International airport revealed evidence of a small single ballistic impact on the aircraft's front quarter. The damage was repaired and the aircraft was able to continue its mission.

On 6 August 2004, a C130 was en route to Baghdad International airport, when a fuel leak was discovered in one of the wing fuel tanks. The aircraft was able to continue to its destination. On arrival, it was found that the wing fuel tank had been ruptured by a small calibre round.

In January 2005, C130 Hercules XV179 was hit by hostile fire, which resulted in the tragic loss of the aircraft, its crew and passengers. This incident was investigated by a RAF Board of Inquiry and the Air Accident Investigation Branch, as outlined in my right hon. Friend's statement of 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1009.

There have been no reported incidents in which C130 Hercules aircraft have been hit by hostile fire since the loss of XV179.

Cadet Corps (Rifles)

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what discussions he has had with cadet organisations concerning rifle *(a)* stocks and *(b)* replacements; and if he will make a statement; [60258]

(2) what plans are in place to replace *(a)* obsolete and *(b)* unusable rifles used by cadet organisations in the UK; and what the timetable is for rifle replacement for cadets. [60261]

Mr. Ingram: There have been no discussions with the cadet organisations about rifle stocks and replacements. There are currently sufficient stocks of all types of cadet rifles. Future options, including replacement and extending the life of the current weapons, will be considered as part of the Department's normal planning process.

Civil Contingency Reaction Force

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel from each of the 14 Territorial Army infantry regiments are signed up for Civil Contingency Reaction Force duties. [62638]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Contractors

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria he uses to decide whether potential contractors are a bad financial risk. [60579]

Mr. Ingram: It is not the Ministry of Defence's practice to place a contract with a supplier if there are reasonable doubts about that supplier's ability to meet its contractual obligations.

The policy guidance currently available to MOD commercial officers when assessing a potential supplier's financial status is in the public domain and can be found on the MOD's Acquisition Management website at: www.ams.mod.uk under the Commercial Managers Toolkit (CMT)/Guidance/Topic Guidance/A-ZTopics(from drop down menu)/"Company Financial Status", particularly paragraphs 33 to 46 headed "Financial Capability Assessment".

Deployments

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are deployed in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan. [62402]

Mr. Ingram: As of 28 March there are around 8,000 United Kingdom forces deployed in Iraq. The UK currently has approximately 2,400 service personnel in Afghanistan both as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission and the International Coalition. This figure includes personnel deployed as part of the commitment of forces to Southern Afghanistan that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 26 January.

Far East Prisoners of War

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims for the Far East Prisoner of War ex gratia payment have been paid to claimants who were interned in Red Cross and Church Homes. [62540]

Mr. Touhig: We do not have figures for the total number of claimants who may have been paid in these categories, in particular because place of internment was not investigated for this who qualified on the basis of lists of those who had been eligible either individually or as the child of a "head of family", under the 1950s scheme based on liquidated Japanese Assets. The information held is as follows:

Five ex gratia payments have been made to Civilian Internees who had been in an International Red Cross Home (Rosary Hill).

One ex gratia payment was made to a Civilian Internee who had been in a convent.

One ex gratia payments was made to a Civilian Internee who had been in a mission compound.

These payments were made in error, mostly during the early stages of the scheme before it was decided that these locations should not qualify as "internment".

First World War (Pardons)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 27 March 2006, reference 60973, how many *(a)* letters, *(b)* emails and *(c)* petitions he has received in each year since 1992 which support the argument that posthumous pardons should not be granted to those soldiers executed in the First World War; and how many signatures were on each petition. [62616]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held in the format requested. The figures relating to the numbers of the communications received since 1992 on the subject of pardons for the soldiers executed during the First World War and to the views expressed have not been collated. It is understood that some of the earlier correspondence may not have been retained and the cost of the work required to compile the information requested would in any event be disproportionate. I can, however, say that the communications opposing posthumous pardons represent a small proportion of the total.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there was British *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian involvement in the initial incident involving two vehicles in Basra on 6 March 2006; and whether British troops discharged their weapons in the aftermath of the incident. [58252]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* There was no UK military or civilian involvement in the initial incident. UK military responded, during which they came under fire and fired six shots in reply. As far as we are aware no one was injured as a result.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK reservists, and from which regiments, will be serving in Iraq in May in 2006. [61842]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary, 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 85–6W about the number of reservists that we plan to deploy to Iraq. On current plans, RAF and Army reservists will be called from the following regiments, arms and branches:

603, 2620, and 2622 Force Protection Squadrons—(RAuxAF).
Medic (612 Sqn)—(RAuxAF).
Movements—4624 Sqn—(RAuxAF).
Mobile (Meteorological) Unit (RAF Sponsored Reserves).
33 Sqn aircrew (RAuxAF).
51 Highland Regiment.
52 Lowland Regiment.
Royal Yeomanry.
Royal Mercian Lancastrian Yeomanry.
West Midlands Regiment.
4 Parachute Regiment.
East of England Regiment.
Kings Cheshire Regiment.
Lancastrian, Cumbrian Volunteers.
London Regiment.
Rifle Volunteers.
Tyne Tees Regiment.
East and West Riding Regiment.
3 Princess of Wales Royal Regiment.
Royal Artillery.
The Honourable Artillery Company.
Royal Engineers.
Royal Signals.
Royal Logistics Corps.
Royal Army Medical Corps.
Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corps.
Adjutant General Corps.
Adjutant General Corps (Royal Military Police).
Joint Civilian Military Corporation Group.
Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers.
3 Military Intelligence Battalion.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what strategy is in place in Iraq to achieve the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration on non-state militia *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in multi-national sector (south-east). [61843]

John Reid: With our coalition partners we continue to press the Iraqi authorities, both at a national and provincial level, to recognise and take action on the issue of militias. The new Iraqi constitution continues the broad policy reflected in the Coalition Provisional Authority Order 91 which set out to integrate individuals, rather than formed militia units, into the Iraqi Security Forces.

Once a new Government is in place, we will strongly encourage it to enact further legislation to control and, ultimately, disband these groups. The development of professional and politically neutral Iraqi Security Forces will be key for the Iraqi Government to have a monopoly on the use of force.

The strategy in multi-national division (south-east) is in line with the national approach and at the local level we are engaged with the provincial chiefs of police in order to make progress on the militia issues.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of security contractors employed by private military companies in Iraq. [61849]

John Reid: The Ministry of Defence does not contract any private military companies or private security companies in Iraq, and we do not monitor the numbers employed by third parties.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated cost was of *(a)* deploying and *(b)* recovering troops and equipment to and from (i) Iraq and (ii) Kuwait between April 2003 and December 2005. [61852]

Mr. Ingram: Operational costs directly relating to the deployment and recovery of troops and equipment from Kuwait and Iraq were subsumed within the overall operation in Iraq. The annual audited figures for the costs of operations in Iraq for the financial year 2003–04 were £1,311 million and 2004–05 £910 million.

Estimated annual costs for operations in Iraq of £1,098 million in 2005–06 were included in spring supplementary estimates published in February. Final figures will be published in the Ministry of Defence's annual report and accounts for 2005–06 following audit by the National Audit Office.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the replacement costs of military equipment damaged and destroyed in Iraq since the start of the war *(a)* in total and *(b)* for (i) tanks and other armoured vehicles, (ii) aircraft and (iii) helicopters; and whether these costs are included in the net additional costs of operations in Iraq. [62189]

Mr. Ingram: The cost of replacing military equipment damaged and destroyed in Iraq is estimated at around £100 million, including £40 million for aircraft and £28 million for helicopters. We do not currently plan to replace any tanks or armoured vehicles as we assess their fleet sizes are sufficient to meet planned out of service dates. These figures are included in annual estimates of the net additional cost of the operation as they are incurred.

Joint Strike Fighter

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what discussions have taken place between his Department and the United States Administration on the transfer of stealth technology in relation to the Joint Strike Fighter; [62040]

(2) whether his Department has discussed with the US Administration the possible cancellation of the second engine for the Joint Strike Fighter. [62041]

Mr. Ingram: Regular discussions take place at all levels with the US Administration on all aspects of the joint strike fighter programme. The Minister for Defence Procurement, Lord Drayson, addressed the Senate Armed Services Committee on these issues on 14 March and discussed the programme with the Department of Defense.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions have taken place with other European Union governments regarding the appointment of a single official to represent the European Union in negotiations with the United States Administration on the Joint Strike Fighter. [62044]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Missile Defence Systems

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* strategic, *(b)* cost and *(c)* legal implications of stationing US interceptor missiles in the UK; [62220]

(2) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* viability and *(b)* merits of UK participation in a ballistic missile defence system. [62222]

John Reid: No decisions have yet been taken on whether or not to acquire ballistic missile defence for the United Kingdom. Work by officials continues to examine potential options for future UK participation in a missile defence system, including the strategic, cost and legal issues arising. UK officials are also working with their NATO counterparts to consider the implications of a recently completed NATO Feasibility Study into options for Alliance missile defence. No terms for basing interceptors in Europe have been proposed, so it is premature to speculate on the range of options that might be available, or on the viability and desirability for the UK of further participation.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had with NATO allies on the basing of US interceptor missiles in European states. [62221]

John Reid: NATO is currently examining the results of a feasibility study into ballistic missile defence for Alliance territories and population centres, and United Kingdom officials are engaged in that work. Ministers have not at this stage discussed the implications of this feasibility study. Potential options for a NATO missile defence system include the provision of assets (such as interceptors) by nations, but no concrete proposals by individual nations are yet under consideration.

Nuclear Deterrent

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what structures exist within Government to provide a framework for formulation of policy on the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent. [62493]

John Reid: Work is under way by officials in a number of Departments to prepare the material which will be needed to support decisions on the future of the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent. Ministers have not yet begun to consider the position in any detail.

RAF Aircrew

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what incentive schemes are used to retain aircrew in the RAF. [61536]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 3 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1002W, on incentive schemes for pilots.

The single targeted taxable financial retention incentive referred to in my previous answer is currently also payable to Fast Jet Weapons System Officers. A similar incentive is payable to Non-Commissioned Aircrew, following 17 years service for a guaranteed five year return of service. This scheme ends on 31 March 2006.

There is also a Professional Aviator Pay Scale for selected Weapons System Officers and a similar scheme is available to Non-Commissioned Aircrew.

Rafale Aircraft

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack), of 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1192W, on Rafale aircraft, whether he has ruled out consideration of an option to purchase the Rafale aircraft for the two new aircraft carriers. [60828]

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contingency plans are in place in relation to the possible withdrawal of the UK from the Joint Strike Fighter project. [62043]

Mr. Ingram: Following Lord Drayson's discussions in Washington earlier this month about Joint Strike Fighter programme, we remain optimistic that we will achieve the appropriate operational sovereignty that we require to proceed with the next phase of the programme. However, the necessary actions have been and will continue to be undertaken to ensure we have the necessary contingency plans. We do not discuss the nature of our contingency plans.

Royal Ordnance Establishments (Chemical Licences)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether long-term contracts have been signed for the supply of *(a)* high explosives, *(b)* Boxer caps, *(c)* initiators and *(d)* other products made at (i) Royal Ordnance Chorley and (ii) Royal Ordnance Bridgwater; and what guarantee of security and supply is required in such cases. [61611]

Mr. Ingram: The supply of general munitions to the Ministry of Defence is covered by a Framework Partnering Agreement with BAES Land Systems. Under the terms of this agreement, which will remain in force until 2010, the company are responsible for maintaining security of supply.

Boxer Caps are currently produced and supplied through BAES Land Systems contracts with ATK and RUAG. Under restructuring arrangements currently being implemented, the supply of other items produced at the Bridgwater and Chorley sites will either transfer to BAES Land Systems' Glascoed facility, or they will be outsourced. Negotiations between BAES Land Systems and potential alternative suppliers are ongoing.

Superannuation Liability

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what total amount of employers' normal contributions accruing superannuation liability charge has been accounted for by his Department in each of the last five years for which data are available. [61368]

Mr. Touhig: Employers' contributions in respect of Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLC) are disclosed as "Pension Costs" in Note 2 to the Department's published Annual Report and Accounts, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. The table lists the ASLC accounted for in the last five years:

Employers' accruing superannuation liability charge

Financial year	*£ million*
2000–01	1,255.9
2001–02	1,305.1
2002–03	1,357.7
2003–04	1,442.7
2004–05	1,486.8

The majority of contributions for civilian staff are paid to the principal civil service pension scheme, with a small contribution payable to the teachers' superannuation scheme and NHS superannuation scheme. Contributions for military personnel are paid to armed forces pension scheme.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Diamond Jubilee

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans are in place to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. [62964]

Mr. Lammy: Currently, there are no plans to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Princess Diana Memorial Fountain

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2090W, on the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain, how much has been spent by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* public bodies for which it is responsible on (i) security, (ii) cleaning, (iii) repair, (iv) refurbishment and (v) other costs in relation to the fountain in each of the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [54678]

Tessa Jowell: Details of expenditure by The Royal Parks, an Executive Agency of DCMS are shown in the table. The costs of security, cleaning and repair are met by The Royal Parks from their operational budget. The expenditure on refurbishment was partially funded by a contribution from DCMS of £150,000 in 2004–05 and £150,000 in 2005–06. It is not possible to show DCMS' expenditure monthly.

Security and cleaning services are provided by the same contractor and cannot be separated. Other costs include utilities, landscape maintenance, fencing and consultancy fees:

£

	Security and cleaning	*Repair*	*Refurbishment*	*Other costs*
2005				
March	0	0	169,822	3,300
April	0	0	339,884	953
May	12,119	0	15,910	3,441
June	9,055	0	116,590	6,524
July	10,554	0	3,244	11,866
August	12,485	0	505	8,208
September	9,191	0	2,229	4,894
October	9,955	0	28,007	4,568
November	5,345	0	0	16,788
December	4,295	0	964	175,696
2006				
January	6,780	0	0	2,529
February	4,385	0	0	4,944

Queen's Birthday

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what events are planned to celebrate the 80th birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. [62965]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS is not organising any special events for the 80th Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. As usual, DCMS will arrange for Union flags to be flown in the Mall for Trooping of the Colour (Queen's Birthday Parade) which marks the Queen's official birthday.

Union Flag

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to enable the Union flag to be flown on public buildings owned by local authorities on any day of the year. [62953]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for issuing the rules for hoisting the Union flag on Government buildings. While there is no formal definition of a Government building for this purpose, it is generally accepted to mean a building owned or used by the Crown and predominately occupied or used by civil servants or Her Majesty's armed forces. Individuals, local authorities and other organisations may fly the Union flag whenever they wish, subject to compliance with any local planning requirement. The national flag of any country, and this includes the Union flag, is exempt from advertisement control provided each flag is flown from a single vertical flagstaff and neither the flag nor the flagstaff display any advertisement additional to the design of the flag.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Royal Assent

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Leader of the House to how many Acts of Parliament the Queen has given Royal Assent in each of the last eight years. [62966]

Mr. Hoon: The information requested has been sourced from the Office of Public Sector Information website www.opsi.gov.uk, for all Acts of the UK Parliament.

The totals include local Acts, the figures for which are given in brackets.

	Total
2005	24 (0)
2004	44 (6)
2003	50 (5)
2002	50 (6)
2001	29 (5)
2000	53 (8)
1999	39 (4)
1998	54 (5)

Television Sets

Jo Swinson: To ask the Leader of the House how many television sets are in operation in his Office *(a)* in total, *(b)* in Ministers' private offices and *(c)* in each building used by his Office; and how many television licences are held by his Office. [62804]

Nigel Griffiths: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons has a total of nine television sets in its accommodation at 2 Carlton Gardens.

It comes within the administrative responsibility of the Privy Council Office, which holds one television license for the building.

PRIME MINISTER

Alistair Campbell/Peter Mandelson

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister when he last invited *(a)* Mr. Alistair Campbell and *(b)* Mr. Peter Mandelson to visit 10 Downing Street in connection with his duties. [60898]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis) on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1353W, and to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 93–94W.

Security Material (Access)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will extend the remit of the Intelligence and Security Committee to provide for access to the Defence Intelligence staff and material produced by it on the same basis as access to MI5, MI6 and GCHQ. [60874]

The Prime Minister: The Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) is an integral part of the MOD and formal oversight of it therefore falls to the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC). However, the Government have recognised that, in order to fulfil its statutory remit of oversight of the expenditure, policy and administration of the intelligence Agencies, the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) needs to take evidence more widely than from the Agencies themselves. The DIS therefore already assists the ISC wherever it can in respect of work under the control of the Chief of Defence Intelligence and of relevance to the ISC, The Secretary of State for Defence wrote to the Chairman of the HCDC on 11 November 2005 reaffirming this position.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the latest Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, if he will break down by nationality the 16,870 applicants granted indefinite leave to remain (ILR) under the Government's family ILR exercise of 24 October 2003. [48464]

Mr. McNulty: The top 25 nationalities of principal applicants are presented in the table. This information is based on internal management information and as such is not published within the official statistics.

	Total
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	1,530
Kosovo	1,495
Sri Lanka	1,235
Turkey	1,220
Pakistan	805
Congo Democratic Republic	625
Nigeria	560
Colombia	535
Ecuador	530
Poland	480
Kenya	450
Somalia	400
Afghanistan	360
Iran	355
Lithuania	315
Croatia	310
Ghana	290
Albania	285
Uganda	245
China (Peoples Republic of China)	235
Sierra Leone	225
Angola	220
Czech Republic	215
India	215
Ukraine	190
Others	3,545

Note:
Totals rounded to nearest 5

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers have received Section 4 hard cases support for a period of over *(a)* one month, *(b)* three months, *(c)* six months, *(d)* nine months and *(e)* 12 months in the last five years. [62230]

Mr. McNulty: It is not possible to provide the figures for the last five years however we do have figures for those currently supported. The figures below set out the periods for those on support as at the end of February 2006. This is management information and is therefore subject to change.

	Number	*Percentage*
Total supported	5,130	—
Under 90 days	1,234	24
91 to 180 days	718	14
181 to 270 days	878	17
271 to 360 days	876	17
360 + days	1,424	28

Child Trafficking

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of children smuggled into the UK in each of the last five years from *(a)* EU countries and *(b)* the rest of the world; and if he will make a statement. [26267]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* The Home Office does not hold centrally, figures relating to the numbers of children smuggled into the UK.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 11 January 2006 (acknowledgement ref. M1059/6) on behalf of Mohammed Khalid Ahsen. [59445]

Mr. McNulty: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham), wrote to my right hon. Friend on 17 March and regrets that he was unable to reply earlier.

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter of 17 January from the right hon. Member for Warley on behalf of Mrs. Bishop of Oldby. [61310]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 24 March.

Prisoners

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners released on licence in each of the past five years were subsequently recalled to prison *(a)* before their Licence Expiry Date (LED) and *(b)* after their LED but before their sentence expiry date due to (i) firearms offences, (ii) drugs offences, (iii) violent crime, (iv) theft and burglary and (v) other crimes. [45639]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not available without incurring disproportionate cost.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners refused parole and released on their non parole release date in each of the past five years were subsequently *(a)* recalled to prison before their sentence expiry date and *(b)* reconvicted after their sentence expiry date for (i) firearms offences, (ii) drugs offences, (iii) violent crimes, (iv) theft and burglary and (v) other offences. [45640]

Fiona Mactaggart: Table 10.8 of the Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004, a copy of which is in the Library of the House, shows the number of recalls of determinate sentence prisoners serving sentences of four years or more. To break the figure down further in respect of offence type would incur disproportionate costs. Reconvictions of offenders after their sentence expiry date are not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners released on licence subsequently breached *(a)* one and *(b)* more than one condition of their licence but were not recalled to prison in each of the past five years. [45648]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners released on licence were subsequently recalled to prison *(a)* before their non-parole release date (NPD) and *(b)* after their NPD but before their licence expiry date in each of the last five years. [45649]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners released on parole were subsequently recalled to prison after their licence expiry date but before their sentence expiry date in each of the last five years. [45862]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no offenders released on parole who are subsequently recalled after their Licence Expiry Date. Prisoners sentenced to four years or more under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 become eligible to be considered for parole at the half-way point of the sentence. If not released on parole, prisoners are released at the two thirds point of the sentence, on supervision licence to the three quarter point of the sentence, the "Licence Expiry Date".

During the period between release and Licence Expiry Date, all offenders are subject to licensed supervision, and may be recalled if they breach the conditions of the licence, or re-offend. At the Licence Expiry Date, the offender is no longer under licensed supervision, but begins the 'at risk' period which lasts until the Sentence Expiry Date. If the offender commits further offences during this period, the court dealing with the new offences, may impose all or part of the outstanding period of the original sentence, to be served with any further sentence given for the new offences.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 replaced these arrangements. Prisoners sentenced to the standard determinate sentence for offences committed on or after five April 2005 will be released at the half way point of their sentence and remain on licensed supervision for the whole of the remainder of the sentence. Special arrangement apply in respect of those made subject to public protection sentences.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been recalled to prison in each of the last five years before their sentence expiry date due to *(a)* firearms offences, *(b)* drug offences, *(c)* theft and burglary, *(d)* vandalism, *(e)* violent crime and *(f)* other offences. [45871]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not available without incurring disproportionate costs.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of expenditure on physical education in prisons was spent on *(a)* inmates and *(b)* staff in the last period for which figures are available. [61506]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2004–05, £60 million was spent on physical education (PE). It is not possible to separate the expenditure on PE between prisoners or staff as staff costs relate directly to the provision of PE to prisoners. 50 per cent. of expenditure was on staff costs. This information is not collected centrally for prisons managed by contracted prisons and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Reconviction Rates

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rates of reconviction were after *(a)* home detention curfew and *(b)* imprisonment in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [58231]

Fiona Mactaggart: Offenders are monitored while on the home detention curfew scheme but information on reconviction after home detention curfew has ended is not routinely collected. Information on reconviction rates following imprisonment are published on an annual basis by the Home Office. The most recent data were published in Appendix A (in particular, table A5) of "Reoffending by adults: results from the 2002 cohort" (HO Online Report 25/05) an online copy of which can be found at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb2505.pdf

Sex Offenders

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sex offenders recalled to prison prior to their sentence expiry date were *(a)* under and *(b)* not under additional supervision in each of the past five years. [45638]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table gives details of offenders recalled before the licence expiry date, broken down by those who were not, and those who were, subject to additional supervision in the form of an extended sentence.

Number of prisoners released on parole who were subsequently recalled by year of release on parole

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
All sexual offences	18	22	23	27	19
Of which serving an extended sentence	3	2	2	3	2

Terrorism

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the co-operation between Islamic terrorist groupings and other terrorist organisations around the world. [57434]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is the policy of successive Governments not to comment on intelligence assessments.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the modalities are for hon. Members to submit evidence to Lord Carlisle for his review of the definition of terrorism; and if he will make a statement. [60170]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 20 March 2006]:* Submissions can be made to Lord Carlisle at his chambers: 9–12 Bell Yard, London WC2A 2JR. We encourage any contribution to the debate of this important matter.

Voice Verification

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the use of voice verification for the tracking of offenders. [61501]

Fiona Mactaggart: Voice verification is used to monitor compliance with requirements to attend a specified programme or to be present at a particular address at specified times. The offender is prompted to telephone a monitoring centre at random intervals, and voice recognition technology is used to confirm his or her identity. At the end of February 2006, a total of 123 people were subject to voice verification at various stages of the criminal justice process.

Women's Refuges

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of refuge places available for women in South Wales in *(a)* each year from 1995 to 2005 and *(b)* the next five years; and if he will make a statement. [60054]

Mr. Hain: I have been asked to reply.

The responsibility in this instance rests with the Welsh Assembly Government. They do not maintain central records of the number of refuge places.

The Assembly Government are committed to tackling the problems faced by women in society, in particular domestic abuse. In March 2005, in partnership with a number of agencies and organisations, they published "Tackling Domestic Abuse: The All Wales National Strategy" which sets out their approach to tackling domestic abuse, including the provision of refuges.

CABINET OFFICE

E-enabled Public Services

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which public services are not 'e-enabled'. [60161]

Mr. Jim Murphy: 96 per cent. of all services are e-enabled.

Departments have informed the Cabinet Office that the public services listed have not yet been e-enabled.

Department of Constitutional Affairs—Possession Claims.

Environment Agency—Live Fish Movements Licence; Waste Management Licence; Discharge Consent Licence; Abstraction licence; Waste Carrier Register.

Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs—Fish Quota Allocations; Fishing Vessel Licences; Catch Logs; CITES Schedule 4 birds licences.

Department for Transport—Bus Operators Grant.

Department of Health—My Healthspace (due late 2007).

Department for Trade and Industry—Energy Group Online Services; Services to Insolvency Practitioners; Redundancy payments.

Home Office—Criminal Records Bureau; Prison Visits; Office of National Statistics—Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Protection

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what categories of information were included in the file on Paul Reeve read by the Minister in reaching his decision on the list 99 determination. [47276]

Ruth Kelly: The Department is unable to comment on individual cases. Where to do so would involve a breach of data protection principles concerning sensitive personal data, which state that personal data should be handled fairly and lawfully, and should not be disclosed unless certain specified conditions are met.

In general, decisions on whether to include an individual on list 99 are taken following consideration of information from a number of sources. These may include the police, the individual, social services, local education authorities, schools and medical experts. This list is not exhaustive and representations may be sought from other sources appropriate to the circumstances.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether anyone listed on *(a)* the Register of Sex Offenders and *(b)* List 99 is employed by the Government or any Government agency in working with children in (i) social services and (ii) social care. [47437]

Ruth Kelly: The Department does not hold the information requested.

It is a criminal offence for a person who is disqualified from working with children under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 to apply for, offer to do, accept, or do any of the work with children set out in the Act. It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer, or fail to remove, a disqualified individual from such a position.

People who are included on List 99 on the grounds of being unsuitable to work with children, and those who are included permanently on the Protection of Children Act List, are automatically disqualified from working with children under the 2000 Act.

There is a duty on child care organisations (ie organisations concerned with the provision of social or health care services to children) to check that any prospective employees who they intend to employ in child care position are not included on the Protection of Children Act List or List 99. If they are, the organisation must not offer employment to that person.

Criminal Records Bureau

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice she has given to employers in regulated child care settings on criminal records bureau checks for their employees. [57094]

Ruth Kelly: In October 2005 changes to the law and relevant national standards clarified that regulated child care employers are legally responsible for determining the suitability of their staff to care for and be in contact with children. Employment checks to determine the suitability of such persons must include a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. In September 2005 Ofsted issued all day care providers with copies of an addendum containing the revisions to the national standards documentation; a letter from the Department indicating how they could access subsidised Criminal Records Bureau checks for new employees, and additional guidance which included advice on the importance of such checks. Ofsted will shortly be writing out to day care providers again with further advice on their obligations in this area.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether schools are to be required by her Department to undertake Criminal Records Bureau checks on all newly appointed *(a)* school governors and *(b)* other non-salaried individuals involved in schools. [46153]

Ruth Kelly: My Department's guidance 'Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children in the Education Service' (issued May 2002) sets out arrangements for both salaried and non-salaried staff and volunteers in schools. As I have already announced, Criminal Records Bureau checks will become compulsory for all newly appointed members of the schools work force.

The proposed vetting and barring scheme will extend further the requirement for mandatory checks. It will become an offence if a check is not made of a governor's, or other regular volunteer's, barred status before they are appointed.

Departmental Policies

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Islington South and Finsbury constituency, the effects on Islington South and Finsbury of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [60730]

Phil Hope: The Islington South and Finsbury constituency lies within Islington local authority. The most recent key stage 2 and GCSE and equivalent results showing information for pupils attending schools in Islington South and Finsbury are given in the following tables:

Key stage 2 results of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Islington South and Finsbury constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above	*1997*	*2005*	*Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2005*
Islington South and Finsbury—English[1]	57	74	17
Islington South and Finsbury—maths(1)	55	66	11
Islington Local Authority—English	56	74	18
Islington Local Authority—maths	57	68	11
National Average—English[2]	63	79	16
National Average—maths[2]	62	75	13

[1] Parliamentary constituency figures are based only on all maintained schools (including city technology colleges and, from 2003, academies) and from 2000 onwards have been adjusted in respect of pupils recently arrived from overseas.

[2] England figures are based on all schools and have not been adjusted in respect of pupils recently arrived from overseas.

GCSE and equivalents[1] results of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Islington South and Finsbury constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2005*	*Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2005*
Islington South and Finsbury—5+ A*-C	27.9	40.5	12.6
Islington South and Finsbury—5+ A*-G	73.7	86.7	13.0
Islington Local Authority—5+ A*-C	24.9	44.1	19.2
Islington Local Authority—5+ A*-G	75.0	85.4	10.4
National Average—5+ A*-C	45.1	56.3	11.2
National Average—5+ A*-G	86.4	89.0	2.6

[1] From 2004 results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Notes:

1. Parliamentary constituency figures are based only on all maintained schools (including city technology colleges and, from 2003, academies) and from 2000 onwards have been adjusted in respect of pupils recently arrived from overseas.
2. England figures are based on all schools and have not been adjusted in respect of pupils recently arrived from overseas.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The primary and secondary national strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local authority and Government office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including literacy and numeracy at age 11, literacy and numeracy at age 14, GCSE and equivalent results, pupils with special educational needs, school initiatives, school work force, school funding and resources, children's social services, early years, class sizes, post-16, higher education and adult education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level.

Learn Direct

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Learn Direct has spent on sponsoring the Jeremy Kyle show. [62504]

Phil Hope: Ufi, the organisation responsible for learndirect, is currently sponsoring a package of programmes on TV. This comprises 12 weeks of 'The Jeremy Kyle Show', on ITV and also 12 weeks of Sunday night drama (three weeks of 'Wild at Heart', six weeks of 'The Royal' and three weeks of 'Heartbeat'. The sponsorship extends to having the learndirect logo and name mentioned at the beginning and end of each programme and during the commercial breaks. These programmes have been chosen because they are watched by the people who Ufi want to reach. The total cost of sponsoring these shows is £425,000 which represents excellent value for the projected number of learners that Ufi expects to respond to the advertising.

List 99

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to paragraph 27 of her document, Review of the List 99 decision making process and policy implications, published on 19 January, if she will list the dates on which the 10 individuals were last working in a school. [46643]

Ruth Kelly: The Department does not release information relating to individual cases.

Overseas Trained Teacher Programme

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the adequacy of background checks carried out on teachers placed under the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme; and if she will make a statement. [43605]

Ruth Kelly: No specific assessment of the adequacy of background checks on teachers placed under the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme has been made. Overseas trained teachers are employed at the time of joining the programme and therefore it is the responsibility of the employer to carry out checks to ensure they meet the standard requirements.

Building on the List 99 Review report published on 19 January, I announced (on 1 March) my intention to review current arrangements for overseas teachers, and the options for strengthening the vetting and recruitment checks made on overseas staff. Discussions with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation will continue and wider consultation involving stakeholders and other Governments Departments will ensure that any changes to guidance or regulations are properly considered in line with other sectors of the children's work force.

Protection of Children Act

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what interaction takes place between *(a)* the Protection of Children Act List, *(b)* List 99 and *(c)* the Register of Sex Offenders. [44932]

Ruth Kelly: My report and accompanying statement of 19 January sets out measures to strengthen arrangements where there is interaction between the Protection of Children Act List, List 99 and the Register of Sex Offenders. We also brought forward legislation on 1 March which sets out how we will further improve arrangements through the introduction of a new vetting and barring scheme.

HEALTH

Ambulance Services

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* fully equipped ambulances and *(b)* ambulance personnel there were in Lancashire in each year since 2004. [62418]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of ambulances is not held centrally. The number of national health service ambulance trust staff in Lancashire in 2004 was 924. Data for 2005 is not yet available.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to merge ambulance services in the West Midlands; how many of these responses were *(a)* in favour and *(b)* against the merger; and which responses in each category were from elected councils. [62426]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not currently held centrally. Strategic health authorities have been asked to feedback to the Department details of consultation responses received.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when it was decided to advertise for the post of directors of the proposed new West Midlands Ambulance Trust; and why the post was advertised before the consultation process on the merger of the ambulance trusts had ended. [62427]

Mr. Byrne: Since we published the ambulance review last year, we have made it clear that the reorganisation of ambulance trusts is subject to consultation. The adverts for these posts do not pre-empt any decisions that Ministers will make following the end of the consultation process.

Both the advert and the application pack clearly state that these appointments are dependent on ministerial decisions on ambulance trust configuration.

This is necessary contingency planning. If a decision is made to change ambulance trust configuration, we would need to be able to move quickly to establish the new organisations in order to minimise uncertainty for staff and for business continuity. This includes having full boards as soon as possible so that decisions can be taken and staff transferred to the new organisations.

If new organisations are not established, appointments will not be made.

Arthritis

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps the Government are taking to increase arthritis awareness in the workplace; and if she will make a statement; [58550]

(2) what representations her Department has received on *(a)* rheumatoid arthritis and *(b)* osteo-arthritis in the workplace; and if she will make a statement. [58549]

Mrs. McGuire: These conditions affect many people of working age. Although rheumatoid arthritis is not caused by work, the development of osteoarthritis can be affected by work activity. With effective management and support, most people with osteoarthritis are able to stay in or return to work.

Osteoarthritis is recognised in the Health and Safety Commission and Executive HSC/E guidance booklet Upper limb disorders in the workplace as one of about 15 kinds of medically diagnosable upper limb disorders. It also affects other parts of the body such as hips and lower limbs. Following HSC/E's recognised ergonomic approach, as set out in the guidance, employers can design jobs and tasks which control the exposure of the workforce to risk factors.

HSC/E has not had specific representations on rheumatoid or osteoarthritis. However, we have worked closely with ARMA, the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance, who have recently published Standards of Care for people with Inflammatory Arthritis, with Osteoarthritis and with Back Pain. HSC/E endorses the advice contained in this guidance.

Cancer

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the national bowel screening programme in primary care trusts in the county of Durham; and if she will make a statement. [61135]

Mr. Byrne: NHS cancer screening programmes are currently assessing strategic health authority bids for their local endoscopy units to become local screening centres when the programme begins. Announcements will be made in due course.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the global trends in the incidence of cancer since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [62179]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Jill Matheson, dated 30 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the global trends in incidence of cancer since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (62179)

Estimates of incidence rates of cancer across the world are published by the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC) on their website http://www-dep.iarc.fr/.

The latest figures are for 2002.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the predicted incidence of cancer in 2020 relative to current levels *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* internationally; and if she will make a statement. [62180]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Jill Matheson, dated 30 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the predicted incidence of cancer in 2020 relative to current levels *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* internationally. I am replying in her absence. (62180)

At present, no figures are available centrally on the future incidence of cancer in the UK.

A project team has been set up with the intention of producing long-term cancer projections up to 2020 for the major cancer sites for England. This is one of several projects conducted by the United Kingdom Association of Cancer Registries (UKACR) Analysis Sub-group on projecting future rates and future numbers of cancer patients. A report will be produced for the Department of Health.

Projections for Scotland were published in "Cancer in Scotland: Sustaining Change—Cancer Incidence Projections for Scotland (2001–2020)" in November 2004. This is available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/30859/0012657.pdf

A European workshop on this topic will be held in September 2006.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) why the NHS colorectal screening programme will not now start on 1 April; when she expects the programme to start; and if she will make a statement; [62462]

(2) what funding she has made available for the NHS colorectal screening programme; when the funding will start; and if she will make a statement. [62463]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have stated their commitment to a national bowel cancer screening programme, for which funding has been agreed. On 30 January 2006, the new Health White Paper "Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services" reaffirmed that the programme will be rolled out from April 2006.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to the letter dated 1 February from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Ms C. Formby. [62436]

Mr. Byrne: A reply was sent on 16 February 2006.

Dentistry

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of visiting dental services that will be affected by the new dental contract in *(a)* England and *(b)* London. [54621]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the arrangements for the delegation of commissioning of national health service primary care dental services to primary care trusts (PCT), which come into effect from 1 April, PCTs will be responsible for commissioning domiciliary and other additional services, taking account of the needs of their populations. It is too early to estimate the number of contracts that PCTs will agree for domiciliary services but, as with the wider reforms to NHS dentistry, our intention is to make these services more responsive to the needs of patients.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists were available to NHS patients in North Yorkshire on 1 April 2005; and how many she expects to be available on the date on which the new dentist's contract is implemented. [60921]

Mr. Byrne: As at 31 March 2005, there were 629 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire strategic health authority (SHA) area. Data as at 1 April 2005 is not readily available.

A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with their primary care trust. Information concerning the amount of time dedicated to NHS work by individual GDS or PDS dentists is not centrally available.

The new dental contract will be introduced on 1 April 2006. Information on the number of NHS dentists signed up to the new contract is therefore not yet available.

Notes:

Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the CDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 5 July 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the CDS or PDS.

Dentists consist of principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. SNA areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Data on the number of dentists working only in private practice is not held centrally.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were employed by *(a)* the Meat Hygiene Service, *(b)* the NHS Estates Agency, *(c)* the NHS Pensions Agency, *(d)* the National Heath Service Purchasing and Supplies, *(e)* the Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, *(f)* the Food Standards Agency and *(g)* her Department in each region in each of the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51320]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the tables.

	Number employed in each region as of January 2006
January 2006	
East Midlands	52
Eastern	15
GOR default value	10
London	1,418
North East	17
North West	27
South East	14
South West	12
West Midlands	16
Yorkshire and Humberside	724
Total	2,306

Notes:

The following points should be noted:

1. The Meat Hygiene Service, Food Standards Agency and the NHS Pensions Agency are no longer part of the Department, therefore no data is held on the Department's human resource information systems.
2. The NHS Estates Agency no longer exists.
3. Vacancy figures presented in the table are numbers of vacancies for which the Department or agency was actively recruiting.
4. A breakdown of vacancies by region is not available.

Number of employees and vacancies by organisation are as follows

	February 2005	*March 2005*	*April 2005*	*May 2005*	*June 2005*	*July 2005*
NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency						
Employees	310	306	308	307	306	306
Vacancies	30	34	32	33	34	34
Percentage of vacancies	9.7	11	10.4	10.7	11.1	11.0
Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency						
Employees	780	798	793	799	817	820
Vacancies	37	37	37	37	38	38
Percentage of vacancies	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.6
Department of Health						
Employees	2,085	2,093	2,122	2,135	2,148	2,164
Vacancies	18	11	20	24	20	22
Percentage of vacancies	0.9	0.5	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.0

	August 2005	September 2005	October 2005	November 2005	December 2005	January 2006
NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency						
Employees	305	313	313	312	315	328
Vacancies	35	27	27	28	25	12
Percentage of vacancies	11.5	8.5	8.6	9.0	7.9	3.7
Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency						
Employees	823	812	814	825	825	n/a
Vacancies	38	38	37	37	37	n/a
Percentage of vacancies	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	n/a
Department of Health						
Employees	2,190	2,211	2,268	2,284	2,286	2,306
Vacancies	18	14	16	12	n/a	n/a
Percentage of vacancies	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5	n/a	n/a

Food Labelling

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will consider the merits of labelling meat and dairy produce to promote the consumption of omega 3 fats which would distinguish between ruminant animals fed predominantly fresh grass and those fed predominantly grain. [61806]

Caroline Flint: Some studies have shown that ruminants fed fresh grass and other forage produce meat and dairy products with slightly higher levels of omega 3 fatty acids. However, these fatty acids differ chemically from the longer chain omega 3 fatty acids present in oily fish and which have been shown to be beneficial for cardiovascular disease. The nutritional consequences of slightly higher levels of intake of the shorter chain omega 3 fatty acids are not known, and so there is no currently justification for such labelling.

General Practitioners

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general medical practitioner whole-time equivalents there are in England; what methodology she used in calculating this number; and what the margin of error is in the estimate. [61258]

Mr. Byrne: In June 2005, there were 32,418 general medical practitioners, excluding general practitioner (GP) retainers and GP registrars. This equated to 29,010 full-time equivalents (FTE).

The new primary medical care contract was introduced in 1 April 2004 and this only stipulates whether GPs are full-time or part-time. Using information from previous years the FTE figures were estimated using factors of 1.0 full-time and 0.6 part-time.

King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken to ensure that the skills of the full-time equivalent staff at King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst can be redeployed in the regional NHS. [61590]

Caroline Flint: This is a local matter. I am informed that the joint human resources team from Western Sussex and Royal West Sussex National Health Service Trust have worked closely to help staff find vacancies within the NHS. Western Sussex Primary Care Trust (PCT) has transferred the consultant and community specialist palliative care team to the PCT to ensure these specialist skills and this service is not lost to NHS patients. Chichester district council has provided support to staff to access alternative employment.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to ensure that standards of care are maintained for those NHS patients *(a)* being treated and *(b)* due to be treated at King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst. [61591]

Caroline Flint: This is a local matter. Responsibility for the provision of health services now rests with local national health service organisation. The local primary care trusts (PCTs) responsible for commissioning treatment for NHS patients have, where possible, commissioned ongoing treatment with the same consultant or nearest local NHS provider who offers the service. I am informed that no existing inpatient had to be transferred as a result of the closure.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that the local NHS has capacity to deal with the effects of the closure of King Edward VII hospital, Midhurst. [61592]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for commissioning care to get the best services for local people, subject to the highest clinical standards and best value for money. At a local level, the PCTs commissioning treatments have been able to secure the necessary capacity to treat these patients without causing capacity problems for local national health service providers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely effect of the possible closure of King Edward VII hospital, Midhurst on waiting times for patients on the waiting list for operations at St. Richard's hospital, Chichester. [61593]

Caroline Flint: This is a local matter. Responsibility for the delivery of local health services, including meeting national waiting time targets, now rests with local national health service organisations. I am informed that the Royal West Sussex NHS Trust has worked closely with Western Sussex Primary Care Trust and King Edward VII hospital and is confident that all patients will be treated within the national waiting time targets.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions took place between representatives of local primary care trusts and officials from her Department on the future of King Edward VII hospital, Midhurst. [61594]

Caroline Flint: I am informed that the Western Sussex Primary Care Trust (PCT) is not aware of any discussions between representatives of the PCT and this Department.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions were held between officials from her Department and Capio Healthcare UK on the future of King Edward VII hospital, Midhurst in the last 12 months. [61595]

Caroline Flint: The Department was made aware of Capio's plan to purchase the King Edward VII hospital in December 2004. Capio has kept the Department informed of developments with their plans to purchase the facility since this time. The Department was informed on 9 March 2006 that the proposed deal would not be going ahead.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the funding deficits in the NHS in *(a)* the Surrey and Sussex and *(b)* Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authorities resulted in a reduction in the funding stream provided to King Edward VII hospital, Midhurst through the primary care trusts. [61614]

Caroline Flint: This is a local matter. It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure that each and every body achieves financial balance. The King Edward VII Hospital has received funding from primary care trusts in Surrey and Sussex and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for activity in the following areas:

Cancer care—oncology and palliative care;

Cardiology;

Cardiac surgery;

Orthopaedic surgery;

Ophthalmology; and

Bariatric surgery

Medicine Use Review (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to educate Hertfordshire GPs about the terms of the medicine use review; and if she will make a statement. [61780]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Medicine use review (MUR) is an advanced service introduced as part of the new contractual framework for community pharmacy. The underlying purpose of this service is, for pharmacists, with the patient's agreement, to improve a patient's knowledge and use of medicines. In particular, the pharmacist can identify side effects and drug interactions that may affect the patient's compliance with instructions given to them by a health professional for taking the medicines and improve the clinical and cost effectiveness of medicines prescribed for patients, thereby reducing waste.

This is a matter for determination by the local primary care trust and I am advised there are a number of local initiatives underway or being developed. The Department has issued national guidance to all PCTs on MURs and information leaflets publicising the service have been made available to patents. No specific national guidance has been issued to general practitioners.

Meningitis

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training requirements there are for doctors in respect of the treatment of meningitis. [61094]

Mr. Byrne: The content and standard of postgraduate medical training is the responsibility of the postgraduate medical education and training board, which is the competent authority for postgraduate medical training in the United Kingdom.

Myasthenia Gravis

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on Government support for those who are diagnosed with myasthenia gravis and their families; [62188]

(2) what plans she has to increase the number of consultants and nurses qualified to diagnose and treat myasthenia gravis; [62192]

(3) what steps she is taking to increase awareness of myasthenia gravis in the medical profession. [62193]

Mr. Byrne: The Government are sympathetic to the needs of patients with myasthenia gravis and the impact this condition can have on their independence and quality of life.

Patients with myasthenia gravis are able to access a range of national health service and social care services, which are tailored to meet their individual needs, to help them manage their condition. It is for primary care trusts, in consultation with other stakeholders, to determine which services, including those for people with myasthenia gravis, their local populations require and ensuring the appropriate provision of these services.

The national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions is supporting local sustained improvements in service quality for people with long-term neurological conditions, including myasthenia gravis. The NSF addresses a range of key issues including the need for equitable access to a range of services; good quality information and support for patients and carers; the ability to see a specialist and get the right investigations and diagnosis as quickly as possible.

It is our intention to publish best practice guidance on musculoskeletal conditions later this year. The publication of this framework will help to raise awareness of all musculoskeletal conditions, including myasthenia gravis, among health professionals.

NHS Logistics Authority

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what risk assessment she has undertaken of the outsourcing of the NHS Logistics Authority to DHL/ Novation. [62190]

Jane Kennedy: The potential outsourcing of NHS Logistics and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency consumables procurement service to DHL/Novation is currently subject to market testing.

The market testing began in August 2004 and throughout this period there has been a thorough examination of risk at every stage. The evaluation of risk has explored the risk of outsourcing at all, and the risk attendant upon outsourcing to each and every one of the bidders, including DHL/Novation.

The Department's risk register has been reviewed by the Office of Government Commerce's Gateway review team and they have been satisfied that it is robust.

Gateway is a review of an acquisition programme or procurement project carried out at key decision points by a team independent of the project team.

NHS Staff

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many temporary NHS *(a)* staff, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* nurses, broken down by specialism, there were in each (i) strategic health authority, (ii) Government office region and (iii) the Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust in the last 12 months for which data are available. [58457]

Mr. Byrne: The Department collects information about locum doctors, including locum general practitioners, and bank nurses.

The information about these staff groups has been placed in the Library. This relates to 30 September 2004, the last date for which information is available.

Obesity

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 726W, on obesity, if she will place in the Library a copy of her Department's evaluation of the local delivery plans. [36049]

Caroline Flint: The Department's role is to agree with strategic health authorities (SHAs) local delivery plans (LDPs) in the form of data trajectories to achieve national targets. These then form the basis of a business agreement with the SHA against which they are performance managed and held to account for the performance of the national health service within their area.

The SHA plans are aggregated from their local primary care trust plans and must, as a minimum, meet national target levels and, where appropriate, SHA envelopes or shares of targets, to be signed off by the Department.

The assessment/sign off process is continuing management relationship process and changes may occur during the three-year planning period.

Opportunities for Volunteering Scheme

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many organisations receive grants through the opportunities for volunteering scheme; how many *(a)* clients and *(b)* volunteers they include; and when she expects to determine their grants for 2006–07. [62444]

Mr. Byrne: The opportunities for volunteering scheme (OFV) funded grants to 271 organisations in 2005–06, involving 13,281 volunteers in the period to October 2005. The Department does not collect data on the number of clients involved in OFV projects. The 16 voluntary sector national agents determine individual OFV grants subject to the allocation of funds to them by the Department. Allocations to national agents will be determined when the Department's central budget review is completed.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of members of the principal civil service pension scheme in her Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45 years old. [62017]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost as it is not available in the required format.

Selenium

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to promote the consumption of foods rich in the mineral selenium; and if she will commission research into raising the selenium content of British soil. [61808]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises that an adequate amount of selenium can be obtained from a varied balanced diet, containing meat, fish or nuts.

The FSA is currently funding research to establish whether the decline in selenium in the diet is having an adverse effect on the health of the United Kingdom population.

Strokes

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she expects to produce a stroke strategy; [62545]

(2) whether the stroke strategy will include proposals to ensure that stroke patients are given a scan as soon as possible. [62546]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has commenced work on an 18-month programme to develop a national strategy for stroke. The Department is progressing work on the strategy through a core steering group to oversee development, project groups that will take forward and develop recommendations on the key areas of the strategy and a wider stroke taskforce that will act as a reference group to ensure wide involvement in the process.

One of the key areas of the stroke strategy will focus on accelerating the emergency response to stroke and improving co-ordination between the different agencies and professionals involved, including improved and rapid access to high quality appropriate scanning.

Vaccines

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the three largest suppliers in financial terms to the national health service of *(a)* influenza, *(b)* polio, *(c)* BCG and *(d)* hepatitis B vaccines in each of the last five years. [61707]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not have information on the market share in financial terms of each supplier.

Influenza vaccines are supplied direct to the national health service by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Sanofi Pasteur MSD, Solvay, Chiron Vaccines, GlaxoSmithKline and MASTA. Hepatitis B vaccine is supplied direct to the NHS by Sanofi Pasteur MSD and GlaxoSmithKline.

The information on market share for these products is commercially confidential.

Prior to September 2004, oral polio vaccine (OPV) was used in the routine national childhood immunisation programme. GlaxoSmithKline was the sole supplier of this product in the United Kingdom from November 2000. From September 2004 onwards, the UK replaced OPV with inactivated polio vaccine (IPV). IPV is provided as one component of the combined vaccines used for protecting against polio and other diseases. These vaccines are supplied by Sanofi Pasteur MSD and GlaxoSmithKline.

The Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine, manufactured by Statens Serum Institute, is supplied to the NHS as part of the national immunisation childhood programme.

vCJD

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to this date, how many people in England have contracted vCJD; and if she will make a statement. [62505]

Caroline Flint: There have been 129 definite or probable cases of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease with last known residence in England to date. Five of these cases are still alive.

Working with Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether being placed on the sex offenders' register is a criterion for being placed on her Department's list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. [44477]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

My statement, and the accompanying report, of 19 January and further statement of 1 March set out clearly the Government's analysis of, and response to, issues concerning child protection and List 99, together with the action we are taking currently and will be taking in the future.

My Department also maintains the Protection of Children Act list which is a referrals-based system. Following disciplinary action for misconduct, if certain conditions are satisfied, child care organisations must, and other organisations may refer the names of individuals employed in child care positions to the Secretary of State (these are usually employers but a small number of other organisations have the power to refer names). To place an individual on the Protection of Children Act List (otherwise than provisionally), providing she is satisfied that the referral is a valid one, the Secretary of State must form the opinion that:

> the referring organisation reasonably considered the person to be guilty of misconduct which harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm, (whether or not in the course of employment), and
>
> that the individual is unsuitable to work with children.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial assistance for alternative livelihoods to opium production was given to *(a)* Badakhshan and *(b)* Nangahar province in Afghanistan in each year since 2002; and if he will make a statement. [61233]

Mr. Straw: According to the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, a total of US$ 490 million worth of international aid was committed towards alternative livelihoods in Afghanistan in 2005–06. US$47.3 million of this assistance was committed to Badakhshan and US$70.1 million to Nangahar. There are no reliable collective figures for assistance specifically to develop alternative livelihoods prior to this date.

The Department for International Development (DFID) supports alternative livelihoods by providing funds for the Government of Afghanistan's National Priority Programmes, which provide immediate support and long term development inputs across every province in Afghanistan. In particular, since 2003 the UK has provided £40 million to the National Solidarity Programme which has helped establish Community Development Councils which deliver community-led development initiatives in thousands of Afghan villages; the National Rural Access Programme, which has brought about employment through public works, such as irrigation schemes and renovation of roads; and the Microfinance and Investment Support Facility, which delivers loan schemes for investments in small-businesses, agriculture and to support service industries such as small shops. All three of these programmes are operating in Badakhshan and Nangahar Provinces.

In addition to supporting these national programmes in Badakhshan DFID has, since 2003, provided £2.5 million to the Aga Khan Foundation to develop alternatives to poppy cultivation and £3 million to an International Organisation for Migration cash-for-work programme which has provided 500,000 labour days as an alternative legal source of income for those who would otherwise be engaged in poppy cultivation.

In Nangahar, DFID is providing £300,000 over three years to Relief International to undertake research into the livelihood impact and market potential of six legume and vegetable crops as potential viable alternatives to opium poppy cultivation.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether local community leaders in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, have made representations to the British embassy in Afghanistan regarding the non-payment of compensation for poppy eradication; [62476]

(2) whether cheques drawn on a British Government funded account at a local bank in Lashkar Gar, Afghanistan have been returned unpaid due to insufficient funds. [62478]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him today (UIN 62477).

Angola

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* members of his Department have had with (i) members and representatives of (A) the Government of and (B) the opposition in Angola and (ii) the Ministry of Defence concerning possible UK (1) logistical and (2) practical assistance to the disarmament process in Angola; and if he will make a statement. [59595]

Ian Pearson: There have been no discussions at ministerial level on this issue with members or representatives of the Government of, and opposition in, Angola. The British Embassy in Luanda, after discussions with the Angolan authorities and in conjunction with the Angolan Interior and Defence Ministries, funded the Halo Trust to carry out a pilot project on how civil disarmament should be approached in Angola. Based on the findings, we are now funding Phase One of Halo's disarmament programme with £281,622 from the joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Department for International Development/ Ministry of Defence Africa Conflict Prevention Pool. This project will initially focus on three central Angolan provinces seriously affected by the civil war.

Belarus

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the Government are providing to help build democratic civil society in Belarus; and if he will make a statement. [61238]

Mr. Straw: The UK has provided £1.5 million since 2002 to assist civil society in Belarus. During our presidency of the EU, we outlined steps to be taken by the EU to increase contact with the Belarusian people and to strengthen support for civil society, including through technical assistance and by opening an EU office in Minsk. To this effect, the EU has transferred €2 million from its Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States programme to the more flexible European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights programme.

Capgemini

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 22 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 423–4W, when he expects to be able to disclose full details of the grounds on which his Department is making a claim against Capgemini. [62617]

Mr. Straw: At the appropriate time I will make a statement, to the extent that I can give details without prejudice to my Department's commercial relations.

Hamas

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on *(a)* dialogue with and *(b)* funding of the incoming Hamas-led government in the Palestinian Territories; and if he will make a statement. [62218]

Mr. Straw: We support the approach set out by the Quartet (US, UN, EU and Russia) on 30 January, which said that the Palestinian Government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous international agreements and obligations.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Middle East, (Dr. Howells), to the hon. Member for Altrincham and Sale West, (Mr. Brady) on 13 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1908W.

Madagascar

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether ministerial visits to Madagascar are planned in the next 12 months. [62361]

Ian Pearson: No ministerial visits to Madagascar are currently planned.

Nepal

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received on *(a)* the security situation, *(b)* promotion of democracy, *(c)* press freedom and *(d)* civil liberties in Nepal. [62178]

Dr. Howells: I have not received any direct representations on Nepal in recent months on the issues of security, democracy, press freedom and civil liberties. However, my Department regularly receives visitors from a wide range of organisations and backgrounds, who come to raise these issues with us, among many other related concerns on Nepal. Since the beginning of this year we have received the following such representations: the Trade Union Congress who met my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs (Ian Pearson) on 15 February, Dalit Solidarity Network on 9 February, Action Aid on 8 February, National Peace Campaign on 1 February, Sushil Pyakurel (former Commissioner at the Nepalese National Human Rights Commission) on 24 February, Liz Philipson (an academic funded by the Department for International Development) on 22 February, the Ganesh man Singh Academy on 14 February, International Crisis Group on 10 February and Peace Brigades International on 7 February. We also regularly answer letters from Members about concerns raised by their constituents, many of which raise these issues.

PRISM

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 575W, on PRISM IT systems, whether all the posts referred to in the answer can now *(a)* access their suppliers and *(b)* approve purchases; whether the software rules granting access to accounting processes have been rectified in all cases; and if he will make a statement. [62618]

Mr. Straw: Most of these posts will start using PRISM from 3 April, although Islamabad, Kabul and Tblisi have elected to go live in May. Rigorous testing is under way to guarantee that they can access their suppliers, approve purchases and are able to access the full accounting processes they require.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 23 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 574W, on PRISM, what share of the responsibility he considers *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the supplier had for not anticipating the problems faced by posts using satellite communications; and if he will make a statement. [62625]

Mr. Straw: It was expected that PRISM performance would be slower at satellite posts. For this reason, Cape Town, a satellite post, was chosen as a PRISM pilot ahead of the main rollout. This post was able to use the system effectively, as were many satellite posts in the early rollout to Europe and the Americas. However, as the rollout progressed, it became evident that performance was poorer at more satellite posts than was acceptable.

The interaction of PRISM and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's communications infrastructure is complex. We have worked closely with the supplier, Capgemini, to consider how to deploy PRISM over our infrastructure. We continue to work with both the supplier and Oracle to analyse and address performance problems. It is not a question of apportioning blame, but of working together to improve performance.

Rendition Allegations (Inquiries)

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his written statement of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 38WS, on rendition allegations (inquiries), if he will name the individuals involved in the two cases in 1998 where the British Government agreed to a request from the US authorities to render a detainee through UK territory or airspace; and through which UK airports they were transferred. [62721]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Grogan) today (UIN 63076).

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his written statement of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 38WS, on rendition allegations (inquiries), if he will name the individuals involved in the two cases in 1998 where the British Government agreed to a request from the US authorities to render a detainee through UK territory or airspace; and through which UK airports they were transferred. [63076]

Dr. Howells: In both cases the individuals were transferred through the UK in order to stand trial in the United States. The cases were as follows:

In June 1998, a flight carrying Mohammed Rashid landed at Prestwick en route to the United States. He was charged for bombing a Pan Am aircraft in August 1982. He pleaded guilty to murder in December 2002 and is due to be sentenced shortly.

In August 1998, Mohamed Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali landed at Stansted en route to the United States. He was charged for his part in the 1998 attack on the US embassy in Nairobi. He was convicted in June 2001 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Reparations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much is owed to the UK in reparations following the second world war, broken down by debtor country. [62275]

Mr. Straw: The Government has resolved state damages claims arising out of the second world war with former Axis countries and with Austria. Nothing is owing.

Sudan

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the timetable is for the peace agreement in Sudan to be signed. [62157]

Ian Pearson: At the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Commission meeting on 10 March, the AU called for the parties to the Darfur conflict to reach a peace agreement at the talks in Abuja, Nigeria, by 30 April. We agree with the AU's emphasis on the urgency of a settlement and are working with the parties and the mediation to ensure that a comprehensive and sustainable peace deal is reached in Abuja. The UK is providing more than £1 million and a number of experts to support the talks.

A comprehensive peace agreement ending over twenty years of north-south civil war was signed on 9 January 2005.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received on the peace agreement in Sudan. [62158]

Ian Pearson: We hold regular discussions with the Sudanese parties, the African Union and key international partners on both the need for a peace agreement in Darfur, and the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) in Sudan. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary addressed the Darfur peace talks in Abuja, Nigeria, on 14 February during which he made clear that we expected the parties to make much faster progress. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development held detailed discussions with the Government of Sudan on the need to reach a peace deal for Darfur and fully implement the CPA during his visit to Sudan on 21–23 February.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the UN on security in Sudan. [62159]

Ian Pearson: We hold regular and ongoing discussions with the UN on security in Sudan, both in New York and in Sudan. On 24 March the UN Security Council passed resolution 1663, renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. The UN Secretary General's special representative for Sudan, Jan Pronk, briefed the Security Council on the situation in Sudan on 21 March raising his concerns about the security situation in Darfur. The international community is clear that the security situation in Sudan, especially Darfur, must be improved as a matter of urgency. We have therefore supported the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission through the north and south of Sudan, and the African Union mission in Darfur.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of levels of violence in southern Sudan. [62160]

Ian Pearson: We are concerned by reports of ongoing violence in southern Sudan, particularly recent attacks against the UN in Yei and Yambio, in which one UN employee was killed. We utterly condemn these attacks and have made clear that those responsible must be brought to justice. We continue to press both the Government of National Unity and Government of South Sudan to implement the comprehensive peace agreement, which provides the best hope for peace throughout Sudan, and to work closely with the United Nations mission in Sudan to extend the rule of law throughout southern Sudan.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Average Earnings

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the average gross weekly earning were in each council area in Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available; [61420]

(2) what the average gross weekly earnings in Northern Ireland are according to the latest Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, broken down by council area. [61104]

Angela E. Smith: The average gross weekly earnings[1] in Northern Ireland for full-time employees according to the latest Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, broken down by council area are provided in the following table.

	Median gross weekly earnings at April 2005 (£)	
District council	*Based on home postcode*	*Based on work postcode*
Antrim	379.0	340.3
Ards	329.1	282.2
Armagh	373.4	327.8
Ballymena	366.5	352.7
Ballymoney	325.6	301.5
Banbridge	396.1	[2]n/a
Belfast	402.5	414.5
Carrickfergus	356.1	401.7
Castlereagh	440.8	377.5
Coleraine	356.9	320.6
Cookstown	337.3	325.1
Craigavon	349.8	328.9
Derry	334.0	487.0
Down	374.7	294.2
Dungannon	402.1	400.1
Fermanagh	314.2	309.8
Larne	369.6	363.7
Limavady	349.1	[2]n/a
Lisburn	396.7	379.0
Magherafelt	382.0	307.9
Moyle	[2]n/a	262.2
Newry and Mourne	402.7	370.8
Newtownabbey	398.0	374.6
North Down	423.4	349.9
Omagh	403.2	384.8
Strabane	299.8	298.2

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[1] The information relates to employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] Estimate is not available (n/a) due to excessive variability.

Cancer Care (Belfast)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what nursing care is provided on weekdays between 6pm and 9am for cancer patients using the Belfast City Hospital Patient Hotel in Belfast. [62622]

Mr. Woodward: No nursing care is provided at the Patients Hotel (Glenview Building) at Belfast City Hospital.

The facility is designed to provide accommodation free of charge for cancer patients from outlying areas who although self caring and mobile require accommodation close to the Cancer Centre to avoid repeated long journeys for daily treatment. In the event that a patient staying at Glenview Building becomes unwell, access to nursing and medical staff is readily available from the hospital.

Patients who have been assessed as requiring nursing care while receiving treatment are admitted to Belfast City Hospital and would therefore not be accommodated in the Glenview Building.

Capita Group

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* Ministers in his Department have held with directors and senior executives of (i) Capita Group plc and (ii) its subsidiaries since 1 January 2004; and whether (A) Capita Group plc and (B) its subsidiaries have provided input (1) in writing and (2) in person to policy discussions in his Department since 1st January 2004. [61070]

Mr. Hain: Capita Group plc has a large number of trading subsidiaries and I am unable to provide the requested information without incurring disproportionate costs.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Car Park (Coleraine)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the multi-storey car park at Abbey Street in Coleraine to be *(a)* completed and *(b)* open. [62620]

Mr. Hanson: The Department for Social Development issued a development brief in respect of the Abbey Street and Mall car park sites in November 2005. One of the objectives of the development brief was to address the parking shortfall in Coleraine town centre. The Department is currently assessing the development proposals which have been submitted in response to the development brief. It is anticipated that the Department will be in a position to appoint a preferred developer or developers for these sites at the end of 2006 and that construction site could commence on one of them during 2007. It is not possible at this time to predict when a multi-storey car park at Abbey Street may be completed and open as the nature and timing of a development on that site has not yet been decided.

Correspondence

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons his Department took more than seven months to reply to the hon. Member for North Down's letter dated 1 August 2005 (TOF/353/2005). [62147]

Mr. Woodward: An administrative error within the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety unfortunately caused the delay to which the hon. Lady refers. I have apologised to the hon. Lady for the delay in my response of 20 March.

Equality Commission

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the salary is of the Political Affairs Officer of the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland; on how many occasions since October 2004 meetings have been sought with political representatives in Northern Ireland by the officer; and with whom meetings were held in that period. [60832]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

> "The Political Affairs Officer post is set at NICS Staff Officer grade and the salary is within the NICS salary scale at this level.
>
> The remit of the post of Political Affairs Officer, which is part of the Communications and Coordination Unit of the Commission, includes the promotion and co-ordination of all points of engagement between ECNI and the political sector in Northern Ireland. The role of the Unit generally covers media work, political liaison, stakeholder liaison and internal/external communications as well as coordination.
>
> Since October 2004, the Political Affairs Officer has on two occasions offered, on behalf of the Commission, briefing meetings on pre-agreed topics, including Section 75, to all of the five main political parties. Staff from across the Commission would be involved in such briefings. In respect of the s75 briefings, four parties have taken up the offer and the DUP have not yet.
>
> In respect of political parties, the Chief Commissioner has sought meetings with the leaders of the five main political parties. The leaders of four parties have accepted the invitation and meetings have taken place—these meetings were attended also by the Chief Executive and the Political Affairs Officer. A meeting with the Leader of the DUP remains outstanding, and efforts continue to be made by the Commission to arrange this meeting.
>
> The Commission has met with all the main political parties in the period specified. These meetings, which have included the Political Affairs Officer, are outlined as follows. Some of these meetings were at the request of the political party:

DUP: 2

SDLP: 3

Sinn Fein: 5

UUP: 1"

Residents' Parking

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Department of Regional Development's Roads Service has assessed the merits of establishing residents' parking schemes in residential areas adjacent to the University of Ulster Magee Campus. [61240]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 30 March 2006:

> You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about whether the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service has assessed the merits of establishing residents' parking schemes in residential areas adjacent to the University of Ulster Magee Campus.
>
> I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.
>
> You will be aware that the introduction of charged parking in the Magee Campus car parks in September 2004 led to complaints from residents in adjacent areas about parking problems. As a result, the University did agree to re-evaluate their decision however, residents would still appear to be concerned about the increased level of parking in adjacent streets.
>
> At present there are no residents' parking schemes operating in Northern Ireland. However, I can advise that policy development on the introduction and operation of residents' parking schemes is well advanced and it is hoped that this process will be completed within the next two months, at which time it will be submitted to the Minister for approval.
>
> Subject to Ministerial approval, Roads Service proposes to initiate detailed surveys and commence formal consultation with the residents living in the vicinity of Magee College to seek agreement on the extent and detail of any such scheme.
>
> You may be aware that the local PSNI agreed to enforce a pilot residents' parking scheme in the university area, however it is unlikely that any scheme will be brought forward in advance of the introduction of Decriminalised Enforcement Parking in October 2006, when the Department will take over the responsibility for the enforcement.
>
> I am advised that in an attempt to provide an interim resolution to some of the concerns of the residents, staff in our Northern Division wrote to the Aberfoyle Residents Committee in October 2005 suggesting the introduction of limited parking waiting restrictions in the area. I understand that to date a reply to this letter has not been received.
>
> I trust you find the above information useful and I can assure you that when residents' parking schemes are being introduced in Londonderry, the area around the Magee Campus will be given a high priority.

Rural Planning

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the rural planning announcement made on 16 March 2006 was first discussed internally within the Department for Regional Development. [61620]

Mr. Woodward: The preparation of Draft Planning Policy Statement 14—"Sustainable Development in the Countryside" commenced with publication of an Issues Paper in June 2004. The option of a more restrictive policy for development in the countryside has been considered since then. The final decision for a more restrictive policy was made in early December 2005.

Sexual Offences (Children)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of offences involving sexual attacks on children in Northern Ireland in 2005. [61422]

Mr. Hanson: At present, Northern Ireland court proceedings and sentencing data sources do not include victim information in relation to the commission of an offence. Therefore, it is only possible to provide the number of convictions for those offences which, by their definition, identify a child as the victim, for example, indecent assault on child or gross indecency with child. Table 1 provides the number of such convictions broken down by offence.

Data beyond 2003 is currently not available.

Table 1: Number of convictions for sexual offences involving children 2003

Offence	*Number of convictions*
Gross indecency with child	6
Buggery with boy under 16 years	1
Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under 14	1
Unlawful carnal knowledge of girl under 17	5
Indecent assault on female child	3
Total	16

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people living in Northern Ireland in January *(a)* 2001 and *(b)* 2006 were on the sex offenders register. [61423]

Mr. Hanson: There were 265 persons living in Northern Ireland subject to the notification requirements of Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in January 2001 and 813 in January 2006.

Victims' March (Dublin)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Republic of Ireland authorities have sought assistance from the police in Northern Ireland regarding the whereabouts of persons resident in Northern Ireland in relation to the disturbances in Dublin on 25 February. [57976]

Mr. Hain: No.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Agency Staff

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35949]

Mrs. McGuire: Information on the number of staff in the Department's agencies and its non-departmental public bodies is in the following table.

Region/ country	*Jobcentre Plus*	*The pension service*	*Child support agency*	*Disability and carers service*	*Appeal service*	*The Rent service*	*Non departmental public bodies*	*HSE*
East Midlands	4,441	985	166	1	91	37	0	134
East of England	4,785	955	226	0	6	41	0	213
London	9,384	412	66	624	84	219	38	615
North East	4,726	4,707	1,138	144	53	41	32	79
North West	11,256	2,398	2,103	4,401	133	121	0	1,392
South East	6,029	402	1,213	0	2	74	0	172
South West	4,704	817	1,496	200	37	74	0	101
West Midlands	6,369	1,194	1,481	172	71	51	85	538
Yorkshire and the Humber	8,442	1,020	333	445	56	61	0	222
Scotland	8,589	1,786	1,451	285	124	0	0	312
Wales	4,682	1,512	111	172	94	0	0	125
Total	73,406	16,189	9,784	6,506	752	718	155	3,903

Notes:

1. HSE is Health and Safety Executive.

2. Figures are civil service full time equivalent posts (rounded, at point in time 31 March 2005, except for HSE where figures are as at 1 April 2005). Columns may not sum due to rounding.

3. Staff on paid maternity leave are excluded.

4. Temporary staff are included.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average waiting time was for an upgrade from the lower rate of attendance allowance to the higher rate in the latest period for which information is available; and whether there is a mechanism for speeding up such an upgrade based on the urgency of the case. [60774]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 30 March 2006:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time was for an upgrade from the lower rate of attendance allowance to the higher rate in the latest period for which information is available; and whether there is a mechanism for speeding up such an upgrade based on the urgency of the case.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information requested regarding what the average waiting time was for an upgrade from the lower rate of attendance allowance to the higher rate is not available.

Claims made under the "Special Rule" provision would receive urgent consideration over and above the norm. The special rules cover people who suffer from a progressive disease that is so severe that they are not expected to live longer than six months.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many fraudulent benefit claims were *(a)* detected and *(b)* prosecuted in each year since 1997. [56247]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* We do not collect information on the number of fraudulent benefit claims detected by local authorities. Information on the number of fraudulent benefit claims detected by DWP is provided in the tables. For the years 1997–8 and 1998–9 there was a broader definition of 'detected fraud', much of which did not lead to an immediate change in benefit entitlement. For those years, the figures are as follows.

	Referrals counted as fraud	*Total sanctions*[1]
1997–98	483,814[2]	11,523
1998–99	420,766[2]	12,964

[1] From December 1998 the system of criminal sanctions was extended to introduce administrative penalties and cautions as an alternative to prosecutions.

[2] Before 1999 a different system for counting cases was used. Figures from 1999 are not comparable with previous figures.

Source:

Fraud Information by Sector (FiBS) & Organised Fraud (OF) Resource Management.

From April 1999 there was a major change in the method of measuring effective cases, limiting the count only to those cases with an immediate change in benefit entitlement. In view of this change, figures from 1999–2000 are set out in the table.

	Referrals accepted for investigation	*Detected fraud (Effective outcomes)*	*Total sanctions*[1]
1999–00	564,543	198,467	20,301
2000–01	441,368	182,569	27,139
2001–02	389,633	160,974	24,906
2002–03	334,974	145,232	23,669
2003–04	325,706	135,710	25,363
2004–05	309,343	150,651	27,175

[1] From December 1998 the system of criminal sanctions was extended to introduce administrative penalties and cautions as an alternative to prosecutions.

Notes:

On the fall in detected cases after 1999:

1. In line with the fall in benefit fraud there has been a reduction in the stock of fraud, leading to fewer referrals and fewer cases for investigation.
2. There has also been a more focused approach to investigation with a more selective referral management system. This has enabled us to concentrate on the more serious criminal investigations to maintain the level of sanctions imposed where fraud has been detected.
3. The development of new initiatives such as data matching with other agencies has also played a significant part in this more targeted approach to fraud investigation.
4. We are also introducing a new customer compliance approach as a more effective method of dealing with the lower level frauds that do not need to be investigated to the criminal standard.

Source:

Fraud Information by Sector (FiBS) & Organised Fraud (OF) Resource Management.

Information regarding the number of prosecutions for benefit fraud is in the table.

Prosecutions and convictions for benefit fraud

	DWP		*Local authorities*		
	Prosecutions	*Convictions*	*Prosecutions*	*Convictions*	*Total convictions*
1997–98	11,523	11,386	—	730	12116
1998–99	10,129	9,967	—	831	10798
1999–2000	9,272	9,129	—	861	9990
2000–01	11,584	11,403	—	1112	12515
2001–02	11,355	11,183	2,101	1,732	12915
2002–03	9,396	9,267	3,187	2,503	11770
2003–04	9,204	9,091	4,601	3,747	12838
2004–05	8,670	8,573	5,544	4,688	13261

Notes:

1. For DWP, prosecutions include convictions and acquittals and are totals of Counter fraud Investigation Service and Organised Fraud cases. For local authorities, prosecutions equate to the number of court summons issued.

Figures for prosecutions by local authorities are not available prior to 2001–02.

Source:
1. For DWP: fraud Information by Sector (FiBS) & Organised Fraud (OF).
2. Resource Management.
3. For local authorities: from 2001–02 onwards the numbers of prosecutions and convictions are taken from subsidy claim forms. Prior to this the numbers are taken from management information returns.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report,* column 1006W, on call centres, if he will break down the figures by each individual benefit or function, including *(a)* the Child Support Agency, *(b)* the Pensions Agency and *(c)* disability living allowance/attendance allowance; and if he will make a statement. [35726]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 12 December 2006]:* The information requested is in the following table:

Table 1

Helplines (see table 2 for explanations of these measures and calculations)	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
CSA NHL CSCS (old scheme)			
Number of call centres	7	7	7
Number of calls handled by an adviser	2,525,392	2,221,572	965,393
Number of calls abandoned	1,027,645	388,726	108,985
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	28.8	14.9	10.1
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	483,426	91,899	2678
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	13.0	3.6	0.3
CS2 (new scheme)			
Number of calls handled by an adviser	891,354	2,018,122	1,223,222
Number of calls abandoned	246,143	405,538	152,506
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	21.6	16.7	11
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	49,823	36,286	18755
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	2.5	1.2	1.2
DLA/AA			
Number of call centres	1	1	1
Number of calls handled by an adviser	3,917,613	4,425,920	2,759,508
Number of calls abandoned	940,799	979,045	186,879
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	19.4	18.1	6.3
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	19,978,016	18,526,578	22,403
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	80.0	77.4	0.75
BEL			
Number of call centres	1	1	1
Number of calls handled by an adviser	1,247,725	1,077,290	488,797
Number of calls abandoned	341,420	375,069	199,054
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	21.5	25.8	28.9
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	907,194	1,070,533	414,738
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	36.3	42.4	37.6
ED			
Number of call centres	11	11	9
Number of calls handled by an adviser	1,796,077	1,727,685	1,067,338
Number of calls abandoned	101,359	84,102	36,608
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	5.34	4.64	3.31
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	0	0	0
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	0	0	0
JSD/FC			
Number of call centres	[1]91	[2]53	[3]39
Number of calls handled by an adviser	7,243,994	10,349,719	7,252,995
Number of calls abandoned	311,897	2,612,842	1,807,237
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	4.1	20.1	19.9
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	0	0	0
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	0	0	0
TPS			
Number of call centres	35	36 down to 32	32 down to 29
Number of calls handled by an adviser	11,815,732	16,661,006	4,907,413
Number of calls abandoned	958,088	1,496,724	207,806
Proportion of calls abandoned (percentage)	7.4	8.2	4
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	[4]567,103	283,934	50,872
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (percentage)	0	2	1.1

[1] Jobcentre Plus had 91 sites taking Jobseeker Direct calls including a large number of small teams within Jobcentres.

[2] In 2004–05 Jobcentre Plus started off with 53 sites and were down to 39 sites by the end of the year.

[3] In 2005–06 Jobcentre Plus started of with 39 sites and are now down to 31 sites (this includes three Employer Direct sites who are taking Jobseeker Direct calls).

[4] The network figure for calls receiving the engaged tone 2003–04 is not calculated in the same format as the other two periods due to the relevant data not being available.

Table 2

Metric	*Explanation*
Number of calls handled by an adviser	This measure is a count of the total number of calls that were answered by agents
Number of calls abandoned	This measure identifies the total number of calls that were abandoned in the queue before being answered by an agent
Proportion of calls abandoned	Calculation: Total abandoned calls divided by total calls presented to the Centre (excluding calls receiving the engaged tone) x100
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	This measure is a count of the number of callers receiving the engaged tone
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone	Calculation: Calls receiving the engaged tone divided by total calls (i.e. calls answered, abandoned, engaged tone, etc) x 100

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* average speed of response to calls and *(b)* proportion of failed calls was for each public call centre operated by or on behalf of his Department in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the staff turnover was in each call centre in the same period. [51717]

Mrs. McGuire: The information that is available is shown in the table. All data relates to November 2005.

Jobcentre Plus Direct, the National Benefit Fraud Hotline and the Pension Service do not collate information on the average speed of answering calls. The data provided for these helplines (x per cent. of calls answered in y seconds) is the closest comparable indicator.

Failed calls are those that are not presented to the contact centre due to technical reasons, such as insufficient line capacity.

Helpline	(a) Average speed of answer in seconds (percentage)	(b) Failed calls (percentage)	(c) Staff turnover (percentage)
Pensions Direct	55.3 in 30 seconds	0.94	[1]—
Pension Information Orderline	94.6 in 30 seconds	1.66	[2]n/a
Pension Guide Orderline	96.5 in 30 seconds	0	[2]n/a
Pension Credit Application Line (Outsourced to Ventura)	45.6 in 30 seconds	1.12	[2]n/a
Pension Centres	82.6 in 30 seconds	0.64	[3]1.26
Retirement Pension Teleclaims	90.8 in 30 seconds	0	[3]1.52
Retirement Pension Forecasting Team	50.6 in 30 seconds	0.74	n/a
Winter Fuel Helpline	92.3 in 30 seconds	0	[3]0.27
International Pension Centre	67.8 in 30 seconds	0	0.54
Deficiency Notices	79.1 in 30 seconds	0	n/a
Jobcentre Plus Direct—Jobseeker Direct	79.6 in 20 seconds	n/a	[4]1.97
Jobcentre Plus Direct—First Contact	75.1 in 20 seconds	n/a	
National Benefit Fraud Hotline	91.72 in 3 seconds	n/a	[5]n/a
Employer Direct	12	n/a	2.16
CSA National Helpline	52	2	1.50
Debt Management	30.75	0.45	1.36
Benefit Enquiry Line	86	43	3.15
Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance	101	25	0.83

n/a = Not available.

[1] Included in Retirement Pensions Teleclaims figures, a separate figure is not available.

[2] These helplines are provided by an external contractor and are not staffed by DWP employees.

[3] This represents the percentage of whole-time equivalent staff who left the Pension Service by resignation or termination only.

[4] Information is not available separately for first contact and jobseeker direct, therefore a total figure has been provided for Jobcentre Plus Direct.

[5] We do not have any information on staff turnover for NBFH, however we are taking steps to ensure this data is available in the future.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee on 15 February 2006, if he will list the identified IT defects in the Child Support Agency computer system; and when he expects each to be resolved. [54454]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 30 March 2006:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee on 15th February 2006 if he will list the identified IT defects in the Child Support Agency computer system; and when he expects each to be resolved.

The timetable for resolution of these defects is part of the negotiated settlement with our supplier and we expect them to be resolved by the end of 2007.

The attached table details the agreed defects.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Category of business process	*Major process area*	*Total defects*
	Receiving the application	57
	Reactive migration	4
	Getting information	33
	Making the calculation	23
	Cancel/withdraw case	5
Getting money flowing	Arranging payment/compliance	80
	Receiving and allocating money	53
	Make payments out	18
	Accounting and client fund reporting	0
	Establishing collections	0
Maintaining compliance	Maintaining and reviewing customer data	59
	Debt management	14
Handoffs and controls	Handoff/auxiliary processes	6
	Work management and controls	5
	Data and file management	14
Contacting and informing our clients	Inform clients and find information	25
	Customer service complaints	0
Migrate and convert	Migration and conversion	3
Business tools, notifications and technical issues	Business tools	20
	Technical	60
	Notification	27
	Total	506

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received on the impact on child poverty of the failure to collect maintenance payments through the Child Support Agency (CSA); and what immediate plans he has to improve CSA collection mechanisms. [60920]

Mr. Plaskitt: The failure of non-resident parents to face up to their responsibilities and pay maintenance causes real hardship for their children. The Child Support Agency (CSA) does have powers to enforce payment of maintenance but this is an area where the Agency has not been sufficiently effective. The issue of enforcement appears regularly in correspondence we receive from parents and their representatives. Enforcement will be considered by Sir David Henshaw as part of his work to redesign the child support system.

In the shorter term we have announced plans to improve collection of maintenance in the agency's operational improvement plan. The agency will be using deduction from earnings orders earlier and more frequently for those who either default on other payment arrangements or indicate that they are unlikely to pay. The agency will more actively manage higher risk cases to ensure payments are made and make more use of information held by HMRC and credit reference agencies to track down those who owe money for their children.

The CSA will employ external debt collection agencies to recover outstanding debt and use their best practice to improve its own collection activity. Over 600 more staff will be trained and effective within the next year and staffing dedicated to enforcement activity quadrupled over the period of the plan. For those parents who continue to avoid paying maintenance we will significantly increase the number brought before the courts, securing debt through liability orders and seizing of assets where appropriate. We will also work with the media and stakeholders to develop a campaign to make clear that failing to pay maintenance has real and lasting consequences for children.

The cumulative effect of all of these measures will lead to more maintenance being paid and more children lifted out of poverty.

Customer Performance Targets

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which of his Department's customer performance targets are being missed on the basis of the latest available information; and if he will make a statement. [35690]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions businesses each publish customer service performance targets. Their performance against current published targets is as follows. Information on the Rent Service and Health and Safety Executive has not been included, as they do not deal with individual customers.

Jobcentre Plus exceeded its 81 per cent. customer service target in 2004–2005, achieving 83.2 per cent. Its performance the year to date to the end of September 2005 is 84.8 per cent.

The Pension Service has two Customer Service targets:

That 92 per cent. of telephone calls to Centres in 2005–06 are answered by an agent. Current performance for the year-to-date to the end of October is 95.2 per cent.

That the percentage of calls to main 0845/0800 numbers receiving an engaged tone or message must be less than 1 per cent. in 2005–06. Current performance in the year-to-date to the end of October is 1.0 per cent.

The Child Support Agency has four customer outcome targets:

> Case compliance—child maintenance and/or arrears will be collected where there is a maintenance liability due to be paid through the collection service from 78 per cent. of new scheme and 75 per cent. of old scheme cases by the end of the reporting year. Current performance in the year to date to the end of September 2005 is 66 per cent. for new scheme and 72 per cent. for old scheme.
>
> Cash compliance—to collect 75 per cent. of new scheme, and 68 per cent. of old scheme, child maintenance and/or arrears where there is a maintenance liability due to be paid through the collection service by the end of the reporting year. Current performance for the year to date to the end of September 2005 for old scheme is 71 per cent. and for new scheme is 61 per cent.
>
> Accuracy—for the last action for all assessments on the old scheme checked in the year to be correct to the nearest penny in 80 per cent. of cases, and for the last decision for all new scheme maintenance calculations to be correct to the nearest penny in 90 per cent. of cases. Current performance for the year to date to the end of September 2005 for the old scheme is 80 per cent. and for new scheme is 83 per cent.
>
> Debt/Arrears—To collect arrears equivalent to 30 per cent. of the amount accruing over the reporting period. At the end of September 2005, performance was currently exceeding the target at 36 per cent.

The Disability and Carers Service has three Customer Service Measurements, with 100 per cent. targets. The performance for the year-to-date to the end of September 2005 is:

> 99 per cent. of customers without an appointment were seen within 10 minutes of arrival.
>
> 96 per cent. of customers received a full or substantive reply to written queries within 10 working days.
>
> 97 per cent. of calls to the switchboard and 99 per cent. of direct dial calls were answered within 30 seconds and 99 per cent. of calls to the switchboard and 87 per cent. of direct dial calls were answered with the standard greeting and a name given.

The Appeals Service has four customer service standards:

> We will reply to general enquiries by post, email and fax as soon as we can and 85 per cent. within 10 working days. For the period April to end of November 2005, sampling exercises have shown that we replied to 90 per cent. of correspondence with 10 working days.
>
> We will respond to 85 per cent. of complaints and Ministerial correspondence within 15 working days. If we cannot, we will advise when we are able to do so together with the name and contact details of the person dealing with the response. For the period April to end of November 2005, we replied to 91 per cent. of administrative complaints within the 15 working day standard.
>
> We will answer the telephone within 30 seconds in 95 per cent. of cases. A sample exercise showed that we answered 98 per cent. of telephone calls within 30 seconds between April and November 2005.
>
> We aim to acknowledge arrival at the tribunal venue and the clerk will meet the appellant not less than five minutes before the hearing time to explain the procedure. A sample survey of appellants in January/February 2005 showed that 99 per cent. who attended a hearing were met not less than five minutes before the hearing time and had the procedure explained to them.

An update on Departmental performance was provided in our Annual Performance Report, which was published in the House in December 2005.

Departmental Costs/Staff

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35871]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration budgets regime overseen by the Treasury relates to Whitehall Departments only. How administration costs are controlled in the Devolved Administrations is a matter for them. Treasury do not monitor regional or central London administration costs separately.

The most recent Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (CMD 6639) has information for provisional 2004–05 departmental administration costs outturn and the Departmental Report (CMD 6539) contains estimated 2004–05 pay bill outturn.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent on involuntary and voluntary staff exit schemes in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department in each year since 1997–98; and if he will make a statement. [32429]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Amounts spent by the Department on staff exit schemes since 1997–98 are set out in the table. The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment including the Employment Service. Figures shown prior to financial year 2001–02 relate only to the former Department of Social Security.

	£ million
1997–98	76.7
1998–99	20.5
1999–00	20.2
2000–01	21.6
2001–02	18.4
2002–03	19.4
2003–04	16.1
2004–05	14.9

An analysis of the amounts spent by individual Agency is only available since the formation of the Department for Work and Pensions in 2001–02. Figures are set out in the following table.

	£ million			
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Benefits Agency	1.73	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Pensions Service	n/a	0.20	0.19	1.29
Child Support Agency	1.40	0.83	0.82	0.84
War Pensions Agency	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
Disability and Carers Service	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
The Appeals Service	0.20	0.15	0.17	0.20
Jobcentre Plus	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.55
Health & Safety Executive	n/a	2.08	0.65	0.75
The Rent Service	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.70
Corporate Centre	15.03	16.17	14.11	9.58
	18.36	19.43	16.12	14.91

Note:
n/a denotes that the Agency did not exist as an entity of the Department for the year in question.

Although not an Agency, the Corporate Centre has also borne the cost of exit schemes when staff working within the Corporate Centre e.g. Group Finance, HR areas have left the Department. Responsibility for exit scheme payments of the former Benefits Agency also transferred to the Corporate Centre when the Agency ceased to exist.

The Department is unable to provide a breakdown of these figures between voluntary and involuntary exit schemes.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to increase energy efficiency within his Department; and if he will make a statement. [60331]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions is fully committed to improving its energy efficiency in line with the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. We are working in collaboration with our PFI Estates Partners, Land Securities Trillium, to install energy efficient equipment across the estate under our 'Spend to Save' investment scheme (including PIR lighting and water boiler controls, extra insulation and fridge/cooler controllers). We also maximise energy efficiency during the life-cycle replacement of plant and equipment. To complement this, a national awareness campaign to encourage all members of staff to play their part is ongoing, and the Department is working with the Carbon Trust under its Carbon Management Programme.

To further reduce CO_2 emissions, the Department has increased to 60 per cent. the percentage of electricity purchased from renewable sources such as wind power and Combined Heat and Power.

Progress against targets is reported in the DWP Sustainable Development Annual Report which was published in December 2005. A copy of this can be found on the DWP website at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/sus-dev/2005/sus-dev05.pdf.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the administrative costs of the Financial Assistance Scheme have been in each year since its creation, including the costs of consultants and advisers. [61414]

Mr. Timms: The information is in the table.

Financial assistance scheme administrative costs

£ million

	2004–05	*2005–06*
Net costs	1.060	4.115
Consultants	0	0.135
Total costs	1.060	4.250

Home Computing Initiative

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost to the Department was of offering its staff participation in the Home Computing Initiative. [62455]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions had intended to launch a Home Computing Initiative in the winter of 2006, following implementation of a new payroll system. The only costs incurred have been the internal staff costs on the early stages of the project, which we estimate to be around £47,000.

Invalidity Benefit

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of invalidity benefit had their benefit reduced in each of the last five years; for what reasons in each case; and if he will make a statement. [45715]

Mrs. McGuire: Invalidity benefit was replaced by incapacity benefit in April 1995. There are a number of reasons why an award of incapacity benefit may be reduced. These include where a claimant has occupational pension income above £85 per week, where a claimant starts work which is not within the permitted work limits where a claimant's spouse's earnings increase to a point which extinguishes entitlement to an adult dependency increase, where a claimant is in hospital and where Child Support Agency payments are deducted from benefit. In addition in areas where Jobcentre Plus is rolled-out and in Pathways to Work pilot areas incapacity benefit can also be reduced where a sanction is applied following non-compliance with the conditionality requirements of the benefit. The vast majority of cases have more than one reason for a deduction and it is not possible to disaggregate the information about all these reductions.

Number of recipients with reductions made from incapacity benefit

Thousand

As at August each year	*All recipients*	*All reductions*
2001	1,581.5	338.7
2002	1,587.7	341.6
2003	1,574.8	330.9
2004	1,549.5	294.7
2005	1,500.6	272.4

Notes:

1. "All recipients" data is produced from WPLS 100 per cent. data. Rate reductions data has been produced from five per cent. sample data and rated up in accordance with WPLS totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and expressed in thousands.
3. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
4. 'Beneficiaries' figures exclude SDA and IB credits only cases.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. and five per cent. sample data.

Learning Disability

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will work with the voluntary sector to develop a common definition of learning disability to be used *(a)* by Jobcentre Plus and *(b)* for future monitoring. [47250]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department currently classifies customers with learning difficulties within the category of 'Mental and behavioural disorders' using the criteria internationally agreed in the ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision). At the moment we are unable to separate these data further into more specific conditions, but we are looking into the feasibility of doing so in future.

The National Benefits database therefore contains information on customers' periods of time on benefit and also records the associated health condition or disability using the ICD10 criteria.

Not everyone with a disability identifies themselves in the same way, nor do they have the same support needs, even if they are diagnosed with the same disability or health condition. Jobcentre Plus personal advisers are trained to discuss with each customer the affect their disability has on them and help them to identify the support most appropriate to them as an individual.

Jobcentre Plus collects a minimum of information about its customers, commensurate with the need to manage programmes and to better meet the needs of the customer. Collecting information about customers' health conditions or disabilities cannot always be relied upon to yield accurate information and even if it did, the information is not always relevant to the job finding process. In the interests of minimizing bureaucracy, and because we prefer to see each customer as an individual with individual needs, we do not consider it appropriate for Jobcentre Plus to routinely ask customers for information which some might regard as unnecessarily intrusive.

However, as a result of changes made recently following consultation with Mencap, from 2006 information on learning disability and on learning difficulty will be identified separately for the Labour Force Survey. Until now, information about people with a learning disability or learning difficulty has been combined into one category. These data are collected independently of the information in the National Benefits database.

Ministerial Activities

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits (i) he and (ii) his predecessor made on departmental business since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he and his predecessor sent in that period. [55716]

Mr. Hutton: Since the 5 May 2005 my predecessor made 19 public speeches and 18 official visits. I have made 14 public speeches and seven official visits. All speeches and visits were conducted in accordance with the ministerial code. The official visits figures do not include departmental visits without an external dimension.

The number of letters sent could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report,* columns 137–140WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House. The report for 2005 will be published in due course.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals diagnosed with myalgic encephalomyelitis are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA); and how many such individuals were refused DLA in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [59915]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table. Information is not kept about the main disabling condition in unsuccessful claims to disability living allowance.

Number[1] of people receiving disability living allowance at 31 August in each of the years from 2003 to 2005 whose main disabling condition was recorded as chronic fatigue syndromes—including myalgic encephalomyelitis/post viral

	Number
2003	14,800
2004	16,300
2005	17,500

[1] Figures are in thousands, rounded to the nearest 100, and exclude cases where payment of the allowance has been suspended because, for example, the person is a hospital in-patient.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Pensions

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to make state pension accrual easier for those in part-time work. [57886]

Mr. Timms: The Government welcome the broad framework of the Pensions Commission's second report which has set out a number of recommendations for the long-term reform of pensions. The Commission's report along with the report "Women and Pensions: The evidence" have formed the basis for the National Pensions Debate.

As part of the debate, we are considering a range of options to help people build up better state pension entitlement, including whether we can do more for part-time workers. In taking forward proposals for reform we will be guided by the five tests we have set out: any changes must promote personal responsibility, be fair to women and carers in particular, and be affordable, simpler to understand, and sustainable. At this stage, the Government are ruling nothing in and nothing out.

We will be considering the feedback from the National Pensions Debate as we work towards national consensus and the publication of a White Paper on pensions reform in the spring.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the annual cost of extending the Pension Protection Fund compensation terms to all those who have lost their occupational pensions since 1997 and whose cases are covered by the parliamentary ombudsman's recent report on occupational pensions. [61857]

Mr. Timms: We estimate that the gross average annual cost of extending the Pension Protection Fund compensation terms to all those covered by the parliamentary ombudsman's report would average

£160 million per year in cash terms over some 60 years. Annual costs would vary over time peaking at £300 million around the year 2030.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1359W, to the hon. Member for Tamworth (Mr. Jenkins), on pensions, what progress has been made towards making an estimate of the number of people who have lost their pensions due to firm insolvency since 1997; and whether this information is available for each *(a)* constituency and *(b)* region. [60773]

Mr. Timms: We estimate that since 1997 around 125,000 people have lost some part of their pension due to the insolvency of the sponsoring employer or where the employer no longer exists. We are now collecting information from pension schemes applying to the financial assistance scheme (FAS), which will enable us to provide actual data on the number of affected members in eligible schemes. However, as this information can only be provided by the pension scheme when close to winding up, it is likely to be some time before we have sufficient data to provide robust figures for each constituency and region.

As explained in my previous answer, based on our most recent data collection for the FAS, we know of around 70,000 non-pensioner members (in 380 schemes) that are potentially eligible for assistance from the FAS as a result of their schemes being wound up in circumstances of insolvency or where the employer no longer exists. In addition to these members we anticipate that a few hundred more schemes, including around 50,000 non-pensioner members and a small number of pensioner members, could come forward and be eligible for assistance. Some of these members may have suffered limited losses and would therefore not be eligible for FAS.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what meetings the Secretary of State has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer since 30 November 2005 to discuss future policy in relation to pensions; and if he will make a statement. [62034]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friends the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions speak regularly about a wide range of policy issues.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the annual cost of implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations set out in his report Trusting in the Pensions Promise. [62321]

Mr. Timms: We estimate that the gross average annual cost of restoring pensions in full to all those covered by the parliamentary ombudsman's report would be £250 million in cash terms over some 60 years. Annual costs would vary over time peaking at £400 million around the year 2030.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role the parliamentary ombudsman will play in negotiations on failed occupational pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [62340]

Mr. Timms: None. The ombudsman's remit is to investigate matters referred to her and report her findings to Parliament, rather than negotiation about public policy. With regard to the ombudsman's recent report on the security of final salary occupational pensions, I refer the hon. Member to my statement made on 15 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 100–02WS.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many events were organised by non-governmental organisations to complement events organised by his Department to mark Pensions Day on 18 March 2006. [61411]

Mr. Timms: This information is not available, but over 200 stakeholder packs have been downloaded from the National Pensions Debate website.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the basis was for his Department's calculation that the cost of making a pension or benefit payment into a Post Office card account is £1. [53700]

Mr. Plaskitt: The calculation that the current cost of making a payment into the Post Office card account is about £1 is based on the commercially confidential arrangements held between the Post Office and my Department.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average cost is of a transaction through a Post Office card account; and if he will make a statement. [54845]

Mr. Timms: Currently the average cost to my Department of making a payment into a Post Office card account is approximately £1.00. compared to £0.01 into a bank or building society account.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions why the contract for the Post Office card account between the Department and Post Office Ltd. prohibits the Post Office from *(a)* publicising the benefits of the card and *(b)* marketing its use without the approval of the Department. [60589]

Mr. Plaskitt: The contract for Post Office card account services was jointly negotiated between Post Office Ltd. and DWP. Post Office Ltd. agreed the controls on publicity and marketing. They are designed to help ensure that the Post Office card account meets its objectives and that customers receive accurate and consistent information to help them choose the account which best meets their needs and circumstances.

The Department and Post Office Ltd. have agreed a considerable amount of publicity and marketing for the Post Office card account, including references in Post Office leaflets and in-branch posters, as well as a section on the Post Office's own website.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what advice is provided to those interested in switching from the Post Office account card to direct payment into a bank account; and whether particular banks are recommended by the telephone operators on the advice line to those inquiring about switching to direct payment. [60631]

Mr. Plaskitt: Most customers who move from having their payments made into a Post Office card account simply supply the Department with the details of their nominated bank or building society account. Our staff are able to give customers information about bank and building society accounts if customers ask for it, including those accounts which can be used at Post Office branches. Our staff do not recommend any particular bank or building society—that decision is for the customer to make.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the *(a)* public documents, *(b)* web pages and *(c)* standard letters sent to hon. Members and constituents in which he has referred to the interim nature of the Post Office card account and which were published before 1 October 2005; which referred to a date by which the Post Office card account would be withdrawn; and if he will place copies in the Library. [62400]

Mr. Plaskitt: We have always made clear that the limited features of the Post Office card account meant that payment into a bank or building society account was likely to be the best option for the vast majority of our customers. This was set out in the response from my right hon. Friend, the Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire, South (Mr. Alexander) to the then hon. Member for Kettering (Phil Sawford) on 17 December 2001, *Official Report*, columns 119–20W.

The Government has a wider financial inclusion agenda to increase the number of people who own, and use, bank accounts. While the Post Office card account provides some customers with a useful "stepping stone" towards mainstream banking it does not amount to full financial inclusion. This was set out in "Promoting Financial Inclusion" issued on 2 December 2004 along with the Chancellor's pre Budget report.

In his reply to the then Member for Perth (Annabel Ewing) on 4 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1196W, my predecessor Chris Pond stated that the Post Office card account contract would end on 31 March 2010. The Government will provide funding for the Post Office card account until then as always planned.

Copies of "Promoting Financial Inclusion" and relevant copies of *Hansard* are already in the Library.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of members of the principal civil service pension scheme in his Department joined the scheme before the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25, *(c)* 30, *(d)* 35, *(e)* 40, *(f)* 45 and *(g)* over 45 years old. [61907]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unemployment (Wirral)

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many unemployed people over 50 years of age have been assisted back to work in *(a)* Wirral West and *(b)* Wirral borough since 1997. [62442]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of people aged 50 and over in Wirral, West and the Wirral metropolitan borough who have been helped into work through all the programmes available to them is not available.

Information on the number of people aged 50 and over who have been helped into work though the new deal 50 plus programme is in the table.

New deal 50 plus

Location	*People into jobs*
Wirral, West constituency	260
Wirral metropolitan borough	1,180

Notes:
1. New deal 50 plus was introduced in April 2000.
2. Latest data are to November 2005.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate

Workers from EU Accession Countries

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many workers from EU accession countries who have signed up with the Worker Registration Scheme are claiming in-work benefits; and if he will make a statement; [47658]

(2) how many workers from EU accession countries are claiming benefits to which they were not previously entitled because they have completed 52 weeks registration under the Worker Registration Scheme; how many are claiming each benefit; what the total cost has been of each benefit thus claimed; what the total cost of all benefit claims by individuals from EU accession countries since 1 May 2004 has been; and if he will make a statement. [47660]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing (Birmingham)

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the terms of reference are of his inquiry into affordable housing in Birmingham; and whether *(a)* officers and *(b)* members of Birmingham city council will be consulted during the inquiry. [60820]

Yvette Cooper: The aim of the inquiry about provision of affordable housing in Birmingham was to establish how the city council could achieve optimal affordable housing outputs from the Government subsidy provided from the Regional Housing Board Affordable Housing Programme allocations in the immediate future and over the longer term.

The Housing Corporation has reported to me that it has discussed with Birmingham city council the effect of land costs for housing associations on the 2006–08 Affordable Housing Programme as there were concerns that high land costs were delaying housing associations from planning new social housing in the city. I understand that the Housing Corporation and Birmingham city council have made significant progress with regards to land costs and improving value for money which has resulted in an increase in the new homes that can be provided through the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Programme for 2006–08.

There remains a concern about the council's longer term approach as it progresses its plans to dispose of surplus housing land to provide new affordable homes or other community facilities. I therefore have asked officials in Government office west midlands to continue to investigate with the city council its approach to the sale of housing land, and the implications of this for the provision of affordable housing and wider neighbourhood regeneration in the city in the long term.

Civil Contingencies

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities fulfil their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004; and what guidance he has issued on such duties. [59978]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004—most of which came fully into force on 14 November 2005—establishes a statutory framework for civil protection arrangements at the local level. The Act sets out clear roles and responsibilities for local responders (including local authorities) establishing a basis for effective performance assessment. The Act's accompanying regulations ("Contingency Planning 2005") set out the detail of the new legislative framework providing a clear set of standards for responders to meet. The supporting statutory guidance "Emergency Preparedness" describes in more detail how these standards can be met. It sets out the requirements of the Act and provides advice on good practice.

The performance of responders against the requirements set out in the Act is assessed by their existing performance assessment frameworks. English local authorities' performance is assessed by the Audit Commission through the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) process. The performance of local authorities in Wales is assessed by the Wales Audit Office.

The Scottish Executive is responsible for making regulations and issuing guidance, under the Act, to local authorities in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, local authorities are subject to the non-statutory Northern Ireland civil contingencies framework.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of the additional duties placed on local authorities by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004; and what proportion of these costs have been met from central funds. [60021]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

As a part of Spending Review 2004, Government officials worked closely with the Local Government Association to build up a detailed assessment of the costs facing local authorities in fulfilling their civil protection activities, including the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act.

As a result of the Spending Review, the Government more than doubled its contribution to the cost of local authorities' civil protection work, providing £40.7 million for local authorities in England and Wales in each of the years covered by the review—2005–06, 2006–07, 2007–08. This uplift in funding was welcomed by the Local Government Association.

Civil Servants

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many senior civil servants are employed in *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies. [59059]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of staff in the senior civil service (SCS) in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister HQ and its agencies at 31 December 2005 is shown in the following table. The figures include staff on paid and unpaid maternity leave and staff on outward loan and secondment.

Organisation	*Number of staff in SCS*
ODPM (C)	145
Government Offices	49
Planning Inspectorate	5
QEII Conference Centre	1
Fire Service College	2
Total	202

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that civil servants from his Department have had with local authority *(a)* staff and *(b)* representatives in the last 12 months; and which councils attended each meeting. [56182]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Civil servants in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hold meetings with local authority staff and representatives on a wide range of subjects. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Councillors' Interests

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition he uses of a *(a)* prejudicial interest and *(b)* personal interest of an elected councillor. [55441]

Mr. Woolas: The model code of conduct for local authority members, issued as a statutory instrument in 2001, sets out the circumstances in which a member must regard himself or herself as having a personal and a prejudicial interest in a matter. Interpretation of these provisions is ultimately a matter for the courts.

The Standards Board for England has published guidance for councillors relating to the code, including the provisions relating to personal and prejudicial interests.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of including commercial properties within the scope of Empty Dwelling Management Orders; and if he will make a statement. [60225]

Yvette Cooper: Converting unoccupied commercial property to housing entails a change of use which would require the consent of the freeholder or leaseholder of the property. While the Government is keen to encourage conversion of redundant commercial property for which residential use may be practical, we recognise that the economic drivers that determine conversion projects differ from the reuse of vacant residential property. We have not assessed the implications of applying the same approach to commercial properties.

Any extension to the powers in the Housing Act 2004 would require new primary legislation.

Environmental Sustainability

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what environmentally sustainable features he requires to be installed in new public buildings. [57877]

Yvette Cooper: On 15 March 2006, the improvements to the energy efficiency standards set out in part L of the Building Regulations was laid in Parliament. The part L changes come into effect in April 2006 and will make a major contribution to the UK's commitment to combat climate change delivering increased energy standards of up to 27 per cent. for new buildings.

We have just completed the consultation on the proposed Code for Sustainable Homes, which is a voluntary scheme being developed with industry and will set environmental performance standards for energy and water efficiency that are higher than those stipulated by regulation.

From April 2006 we will require all new homes built by the resident social landlords with Housing Corporation funding to comply with level 3 of the code. This will also apply to homes developed by the English Partnership and all others receiving Government funding.

Greater Manchester

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to introduce an *(a)* elected and *(b)* appointed structure of county-wide governance for Greater Manchester; and if he will make a statement. [62201]

Mr. Woolas: Representatives from Manchester city-region (including AGMA), are due to present their business case to David Miliband this week. This is expected to set out their vision for the city-region and outline their key proposals to promote economic and social performance, which includes options for devolved decision making. Further business case presentations are also due from other core cities during the next few months.

The office will continue to engage with cities and other Government Departments to further develop the ideas and will develop responses which draw on the business case proposals and inform our thinking ahead of the forthcoming local government White Paper.

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for laying the Home Information Pack Regulations 2006 before Parliament. [60133]

Yvette Cooper: We are planning to lay the Home Information Pack Content Regulations before Parliament in June 2006. Regulations relating to Home Information Pack forms and access to the register of Home Condition Reports will be laid later in the year following some trialling of the forms and discussions with the industry.

Housing

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new social homes have been *(a)* granted planning permission, *(b)* started and *(c)* completed in each year since 1997. [58565]

Yvette Cooper: Information on the number of new social homes granted planning permission is not held centrally.

The number of registered social landlord and local authority dwellings for rent started and completed as reported by building control can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/36/
Table204Excel31Kb_id1156036.xls

For the total supply of social homes including new build and acquisitions, as reported by the Housing Corporation, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 21 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 279W.

The Government have announced a £3.9 billion programme through the Housing Corporation for the next two years which includes 35,000 low cost home ownership home and 49,000 social rented homes. This is part of a programme to increase the level of new social housing by 50 per cent. by 2007–08 against 2004–05 levels.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* council owned, *(b)* privately owned, *(c)* housing association owned and *(d)* arm's length management organisation managed properties in each London borough do not have an indoor toilet; and if he will make a statement. [61137]

Yvette Cooper: The Department does not collect this information from local authorities and there are too few homes without indoor toilets in the housing stock as a whole to make a robust estimate from housing surveys. The English House Condition Survey estimates that around 200,000 homes in England are missing at least one of the five basic amenities (these are: kitchen sink; bath or shower in a bathroom; wash hand basin; hot and cold water supply; indoor toilet). These are mainly properties that were being renovated at the time of the survey and a few isolated rural homes.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new homes he expects to be built in *(a)* Lancaster and Wyre and *(b)* Lancashire in (i) 2006–07 and (ii) each of the following five years. [61327]

Yvette Cooper: It is not possible to be specific about numbers of homes expected to be built each year. The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan makes provision for the following annual average number of dwellings each year until 2016:

	Number of dwellings
Lancaster	320
Wyre	205
Lancashire	[1]2,380

[1] Of which the Lancaster and Wyre figures are a subset.

It is for local planning authorities to monitor and manage dwellings actually built and planning permissions granted.

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the relevant water companies on their capacity to supply all the projected new homes in London and the South East. [61304]

Yvette Cooper: The Deputy Prime Minister has not held discussions with the water companies on these issues. However, Baroness Andrews met the water companies, the Environment Agency and Ofwat on 7 March this year at a seminar organised by ODPM at which these issues were discussed.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* reserves and *(b)* pre-tax financial position was of each housing association in the latest period for which figures are available. [61668]

Yvette Cooper: The figures for *(a)* reserves and *(b)* pre-tax financial position of each housing association registered with the Housing Corporation for periods ending in 2004–05 have been placed in the Library of the House. The total figures for the period 2004–05 for those RSLs with over 250 units disclosed in their accounts are *(a)* reserves at £11.8 billion and *(b)* pre-tax financial position at £443 million. The figures for those RSLs with less than 250 units are *(a)* reserves at £1.1 billion and *(b)* pre-tax financial position at £63 million. The reserves total reflects revenue reserves and revaluation reserves.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homes have been built for key workers under each of the *(a)* Intermediate Rent, *(b)* Homebuy New Build and *(c)* Mixed Funded for Sale programmes; how many have been sold or let under each programme; and in cases where homes have remained empty how long they have been empty, broken down by local authority. [28826]

Yvette Cooper: As at the end of February 2006, 2,817 homes have been built through the Key Worker Living Programme; 1,424 for Intermediate Rent of which 1,201 have been let; and 1,393 for low cost home ownership of which 615 have been sold. 45 per cent. of the homes that have not been let or sold were completed in the past 3 months. I will send the hon. Member a breakdown of the number of empty properties by local authority since October 2005.

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the capital receipts from right-to-buy sales in debt-free local authorities will be centrally pooled in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [58692]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not estimate future right-to-buy receipts but does estimate future total housing capital receipts (which include right-to-buy figures). Estimates are subject to a number of volatile factors such as the state of the housing market, lending rates, amounts of disposable income and stock condition, and are kept under constant review.

ODPM's estimate is as follows:

	Debt-free authorities' housing receipts pooled (£ million)
2005–06	52
2006–07	72
2007–08	88

Since 1997 the Government have consistently invested more in housing than it has received in pooled receipts. In 2004–05 the amount paid to Government from all housing receipts (not just right-to-buy) was £1.7 billion. The amount invested in housing was £4.1 billion i.e. almost 2½ times the amount. The ratio of amount invested to amount of pooled receipts is expected to increase substantially in the future.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total debt on council housing was in *(a)* 1980, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2005; and how much has been (i) paid and (ii) written off. [49736]

Yvette Cooper: The total debt attributed to council housing in 1980 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In 2000–01 the total debt was £17.6 billion. This has now fallen to an estimated £13.3 billion, although that figure may vary between now and when the final figure for the 2005–06 financial year is known. With the exception of £1.8 billion in 'overhanging debt' payments made by government, the reduction of £4.3 billion has been due to repayments made by local authorities. ('Overhanging debt' is the debt an authority is unable to repay from the receipt it gets on the transfer of its stock to a housing association. Debt repayment is the first call on such receipts. Where the outstanding debt exceeds the receipt, the Government pays off the excess amount of debt—the overhanging debt. The Government chooses to repay such debt rather than continuing to support that debt—as had happened previously through the allowance made for debt service charges in the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system. The choice between paying off overhanging debt and continuing to support the debt through subsidy is intended to be broadly neutral in net financial terms for the authority.)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the proceeds from the sale of council houses are allocated. [49773]

Yvette Cooper: A council is required to pay to the Government (i.e. "pool") 75 per cent. of its receipts (less its costs and various allowances) from right to buy sales or any other scheme where the tenant intends to use the property as their principal dwelling. It may keep the remaining 25 per cent. to spend on capital purposes.

Councils that were debt free on 31 March 2004 benefit from a transitional regime following the introduction of pooling from April 2004. In 2004–05 they were allowed to keep 75 per cent. of the amount they would otherwise have been required to pool; in 2005–06 50 per cent. and in 2006–07 25 per cent.

Since 1997 the Government have consistently invested more in housing than it has received in pooled capital receipts. In 2004–05 the amount paid to Government from all housing receipts (not just right to buy) was £1.7 billion. The amount invested in housing was £4.1 billion i.e. almost 2 ½ times the amount. The ratio of amount invested to amount set aside is expected to increase substantially in the future.

Pooled capital receipts collected from debt-free and with-debt authorities are treated differently. Pooled capital receipts from debt-free authorities, that is, local authorities that had no long term outstanding borrowing on 31 March 2004 come to the ODPM, where they are used to support sustainable communities projects such as new social housing and decent homes. Pooled capital receipts from debt-free authorities, that is, local authorities that had long term outstanding borrowing on 31 March 2004 go to the Treasury, where they are recycled as investment, for instance as capital investment in housing as described above.

If the disposal of the council house is not to somebody who intends to use it as their principal dwelling and is not through the right to buy, the local authority may use their capital allowance to extinguish up to 100 per cent. of the capital receipt for use on the provision of affordable housing or regeneration within the local authority. In 2004–2005, £23 8 million of capital receipts were extinguished in this way for retention by local authorities.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of shared equity housing have been made available in Merton in each year since 1980. [50053]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of shared equity properties sold in Merton in each year since 1997–98 are listed in the following table.

	Number shared equity housing
1997–98	16
1998–99	12
1999–2000	38
2000–01	33
2001–02	18
2002–03	7
2003–04	36
2004–05	58

Source:
Housing Corporation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of total right to buy revenues was taken from councils in 2004–05; and how much in usable receipts was kept by them. [40349]

Yvette Cooper: A council is required to pay to the Government (i.e. "pool") 75 per cent. of its receipts from right to buy sales (less its costs and various allowances). It may keep the remaining 25 per cent. to spend on capital purposes.

Councils that were debt free on 31 March 2004 benefit from a transitional regime following the introduction of pooling from April 2004. In 2004–05 they were allowed to keep 75 per cent. of the amount they would otherwise have been required to pool; in 2005–06 50 per cent. and in 2006–07 25 per cent.

Since 1997 the Government have consistently invested more in housing than it has received in pooled capital receipts. In 2004–05 the amount paid to Government from all housing receipts (not just right to buy) was £1.7 billion. The amount invested in housing was £4.1 billion i.e. almost 2½ times the amount. The ratio of amount invested to amount set aside is expected to increase substantially in the future.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce an investment allowance for council housing as proposed by his Department in 2002. [40369]

Yvette Cooper: The Investment Allowance was one of a number of options for radical change consulted on in the Office's August 2002 consultation paper "The Way Forward for Housing Capital Finance". The aim of the paper was to solicit views on simplifying and enhancing the capital financing regime.

Only 20 per cent. of local authorities expressed an interest in the allowance and then primarily as an avenue for securing additional funding rather than as a mechanism for delivering existing levels of funding.

Capital financing is provided through a range of different routes, including the Major Repairs Allowance, the Regional Housing Pot and Capital Receipts Initiative. The proposals for an Investment Allowance were included for discussion at that time simply to stimulate consideration of whether the delivery of existing resources could be simplified.

The Government decided, because of the low and qualified level of support to respond by introducing on 1 April 2004, new housing capital finance arrangements, the Prudential Borrowing regime, which allows local authorities to determine for themselves what they can afford to borrow above borrowing supported by central Government, supported from their own resources.

This has provided greater flexibility for local authority borrowing.

Lancashire County Council (Planning Appeals)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful appeals have been made against planning decisions made by Lancashire county council in each year since 1997. [61643]

Yvette Cooper: Records held by the Planning Inspectorate for Lancashire county council go back to 2000 only. The following table shows the number of appeals *(a)* allowed/successful and *(b)* dismissed/unsuccessful and the total number decided.

	(a) Number of appeals allowed	*(b) Number of appeals dismissed*	*Total number of appeals*
2000	4	2	6
2004	1	2	3
2005	0	1	1

Local Government Inspection

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government is making to local government inspection. [60134]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consultation document "Inspection Reform: The Future of Local Services Inspection" invites discussion on the future role that inspection should play within a more flexible performance framework, and seeks views on the establishment of a local services inspectorate. This is part of the wider work being carried out across Government to reduce the amount of inspection and to rationalise the number of inspectorates from 11 to four, which will enable better co-ordination and reduce duplication.

The consultation closed on 3 March 2006, and we are now considering the responses, which will help to formulate future policy decisions on the shape of local government inspection.

Local Government Restructuring

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 2240W, on local government restructuring, if he will list the councils with which members of his Department had meetings on the six separate occasions since December 2005. [56130]

Mr. Woolas: An invitation to attend a meeting with Office of the Deputy Prime Minister officials to discuss governance and structures was extended to the chief executives of all county, district and unitary (other than London borough and metropolitan district) councils. A total of eight meetings have now been held. A list of those councils that indicated their intention of attending a meeting has previously been sent to the hon. Member. A record of actual attendance at each meeting is not held.

Ministerial Meetings

Michael Gove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that the Minister for communities and local government has had with local authority officials and representatives concerning local government restructuring in the last 12 months. [54650]

Mr. Woolas: Ministers have attended three county dialogues to date, in Shropshire, Gloucestershire and East Sussex, held with officials, representatives, members and other local government stakeholders, as part of the wider debate on local governance.

Ministers have held numerous meetings with local authority officials and representatives over the past 12 months at which a range of topics have been discussed, and may have included, on occasion, local government reorganisation.

Planning

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* unsuccessful and *(b)* successful planning appeals have been made against (i) Stockport metropolitan borough council and (ii) Tameside metropolitan borough council in each year since 2000. [62199]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show the number of planning appeals *(a)* unsuccessful (dismissed), *(b)* successful (allowed) and the total number of appeals decided relating to both authorities.

Stockport metropolitan borough council

	Decided	*(a) Dismissed/ unsuccessful*	*(b) Allowed/ successful*
2000	39	23	16
2001	49	30	19
2002	51	31	20
2003	86	50	36
2004	61	36	25
2005	68	53	15

Tameside metropolitan borough council

	Decided	*(a) Dismissed/ unsuccessful*	*(b) Allowed/ successful*
2000	17	9	8
2001	27	14	13
2002	31	20	11
2003	43	22	21
2004	23	9	14
2005	39	22	17

John Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account is taken of existing residents' right to privacy in assessing planning applications for new developments. [62233]

Yvette Cooper: The degree of potential overlooking of existing homes from proposed development can be a material consideration when a planning application is being assessed. It is for the local planning authority to decide, on a case by case basis, whether to grant or refuse planning permission, and whether neighbour privacy could be protected by conditions imposed on any permission granted.

John Penrose: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will change the terms of C2 planning consent so that drug rehabilitation centres and secure mental institutions are not included in the same class of developments as retirement and convalescent homes; [60986]

(2) what assessment he has made of the possible impact on *(a)* crime and *(b)* local health and social services of drug rehabilitation centres and secure mental institutions which require C2 planning consent. [60987]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recently consulted on applying the planning acts to the Crown and these proposals included creating a new Class C2A secure residential institutions for uses such as a prison, secure hospitals and military barracks (for more information see http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1164257).

The ODPM has made no assessment of the possible impact on crime and local health and social services of drug rehabilitation centres and secure mental institutions.

Section 215 Notices

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many notices under section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 have been *(a)* approved and *(b)* served in each year since that section came into force; and if he will make a statement. [62633]

Yvette Cooper: Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides a local planning authority (LPA) with the power, in certain circumstances, to take steps requiring land to be cleaned up when its condition adversely affects the amenity of the area. The use of Section 215 by LPAs is discretionary and it is up to the LPA to decide whether a notice under these provisions would be appropriate in a particular case, taking account of the local circumstances. Therefore, the information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Small Firms

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition the Department uses of a small firm. [59290]

Yvette Cooper: There is no single definition of a small firm and terms such as "small firm" and "SME" (Small and Medium sized Enterprise) are used interchangeably. Two of the most common definitions are those provided by the European Union and the Companies Act 1985.

The European Commission definition specifies a maximum headcount, turnover, balance sheet and independence criteria to qualify as a small firm.

The Companies Act 1985 states that a company is 'small' if it satisfies at least two of the following criteria: a turnover of not more than £5.6 million; a balance sheet total of not more than £2.8 million; and not more than 50 employees.

Use of the European Commission definition is voluntary and the Companies Act 1985 definition determines the eligibility of small firms for certain accounting and auditing exemptions and is not applied universally.

Sustainable Building

Alan Simpson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of his Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the 2004–05 financial year. [58734]

Yvette Cooper: In 2004–05 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister allocated none of its building programme budget to energy self-generation or water recycling measures. This position is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government estates sets an energy target (E3) that 10 per cent. electricity should be obtained from renewable sources and suggests this can be through the purchase of renewable electricity or self-generation of renewable electricity. ODPM has Combined Heat and Power (CHP) sets in two of its London buildings, and in the current energy procurement round (2005–06) the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has obtained 100 per cent. renewable electricity for their three London HQ offices.

Since 2003–04 the total proportion of renewable electricity used by the Office of the Deputy PM in its buildings in *(a)* the Office and *(b)* its Agencies each year is as follows:

Percentage

	Office	*Agencies*
2003–04	98	29
2004–05	98	46

The data for the Office covers Ashdown House, Eland House and Hempstead House.

Agencies include Planning Inspectorate, the Fire Service College and the QEII Conference Centre.

In respect of the water target (C2); ODPM had a water audit carried out in 2005 at one London HQ building (Ashdown House). A number of recommendations were made for directly reducing water use which are being followed up. There were limited possibilities identified for water recycling initiatives as it was considered that retrofitting rainwater harvesting equipment was not an economically viable proposition.

This answer does not include the buildings occupied by Government Offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Thames Basin Heaths

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when his Department first made an assessment of the implications of the implementation of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area for Government housing plans in the South East; [61351]

(2) what assessment he has made of the likely impact on the distribution of housing allocations between counties within the South East region of the introduction of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. [61353]

Yvette Cooper: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister officials have been working closely with Defra, English Nature, the South East England regional assembly, and local planning authorities over the last two years to develop a strategic approach to housing delivery around the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Our aim is to ensure that we can deliver much needed housing while at the same time providing the necessary protection to the SPA. Discussions are continuing on a draft delivery plan that aims to provide a strategic framework for mitigation against the impacts that new housing development could have on the SPA.

The likely impact of the Thames Basin Heath SPA on the distribution of housing allocations between counties within the South East is a matter for consideration in the context of the South East plan. Work currently being undertaken will inform the examination in public of that plan which is due to begin in November 2006.